FRIDAY
November 22, 2024

DELHI
CITY EDITION
22 Pages ₹12.00

THE HINDU

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Regd. DL(ND)-11/6110/2006-07-08
RNI No. UPENG/2012/49940

Vol. 14 • No. 278

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Tirupati » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

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ICC issues warrants against Netanyahu
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Gautam Adani indicted in U.S. over charges of bribery, securities fraud

- He and associates allegedly promised over $250 million in bribes to Indian officials
- Regulator says they defrauded U.S. investors, global financial institutions
- Shares of Adani firms lose $27 billion in market value; Group denies allegations

G. Sampath
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has issued a five-count criminal indictment of Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group, and several of his business associates.

The charges include promising more than $250 million in bribes to Indian government officials to secure solar energy contracts, conspiracies to commit securities and wire fraud, and orchestrating "a multi-billion dollar scheme" to defraud U.S. investors and global financial institutions by giving "false and misleading statements".

The indictment was unsealed by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York late on November 20.

In a parallel move, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has also charged Mr. Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani (the former's nephew and head of Adani Green Energy), along with Cyril Cabanes, a top executive of Azure Power Global Ltd. (a New Delhi-headquartered renewable energy company that used to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange), with a massive bribery scheme involving Adani Green and Azure Power.

In the U.S., it is illegal to make payments to foreign government officials in a bid to obtain or retain business. Raising money by misleading investors about key corporate governance decisions and hiding the authorisation of bribery practices in company reports are also treated as offences.

While the DOJ indictment constitutes a criminal case, the SEC's is a civil complaint, and if proved, could result in a "permanent injunction, a civil penalty, and an officer and director bar".

The SEC's complaints were filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Under a cloud: The Adani Group said it would seek all possible legal measures against the indictment. VIJAY SONEJI

Withdraws bond issue

Reacting to the news of the indictment, Adani Green Energy Ltd. said on Thursday it was withdrawing a proposed $600-million bond issue.

Shares of Adani Group companies lost about $27 billion in market value in the domestic markets, led by an over 23% decline in its flagship, Adani Enterprises Ltd. This was the steepest drop in its share value since February 2023, when it was hit by allegations of misdemeanour and corporate malfeasance levelled by U.S.-based Hindenberg Research.

The Adani Group denied the allegations of the U.S. Department of Justice and the SEC, terming them "baseless".

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FULL COVERAGE
» PAGES 17 & 18

'A.P. CM, officials were paid bribe of ₹1,750 crore'

AMARAVATI
The Adani Group paid ₹1,750 crore in bribes to a former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and some officials for a power purchase agreement, says the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. » PAGE 17

No links with Adani companies, says T.N. Minister

KARUR
Tamil Nadu Electricity Minister V. Senthilbalaji on Thursday said there was no commercial link between the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) and the Adani Group companies in any manner. » PAGE 17

IN BRIEF

Mahayuti, MVA pin hopes on rise in voter turnout

MUMBAI
The rise in voter turnout for the Maharashtra Assembly poll, compared with the 2019 figure, has been claimed as a sign of support by both the ruling Mahayuti and the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi. » Page 16

SP demands repolling in four U.P. seats

LUCKNOW
The Samajwadi Party on Thursday demanded repolling in four Assembly seats alleging that the administration crossed all limits of injustice during voting for the bypolls on November 20. » Page 5

Consensus on new climate finance goal remains elusive

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

A day before this round of UN climate talks are scheduled to end in Baku, developed and developing nations are far from agreeing on a number – still denoted as 'x' in the draft text – that will define the world's new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on climate finance.

The NCQG refers to money that will be given by developed countries to developing nations to help them transition away from fossil fuels and curb greenhouse gas emissions. Developing nations say this would cost "trillions of dollars". To this end, developed countries say they have transferred $115 billion in 2021-22 – though developing nations say the target has not been met.

As per the Paris Agreement, a new target above $100 billion must be agreed upon by 2025.

A crucial point that is to be resolved is making a clear distinction between the NCQG and climate finance in general. Climate finance technically includes every dollar that is even remotely connected to some aspect of 'climate' and therefore includes profit-making business investments as well.

By this metric, there is agreement that global climate finance flows in 2021-2022 increased by 63% compared to 2019-2020, reaching an annual average of $1.3 trillion.

Fissures on finance

According to a contentious paragraph in the current version of the agreement text made public on Thursday morning, a block of developing countries has submitted that the NCQG must be 'x' trillion dollars annually, from 2025 till 2035, to be made available to all developing countries as grants or low-cost loans.

This money must be provided to help countries meet their nationally determined contributions and buffer against existing threats of climate change and compensate for climate damage that has already taken place.

Brainstorming on AI

A humanoid on stage at the *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 in Chennai on Thursday. From left are L.V. Navaneeth, CEO, The Hindu Group; Kumar Jayant, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Information Technology and Digital Services, Government of Tamil Nadu; Suresh Raman, Convener, CII TN Information and Communication Technology Panel and vice-president and Regional Head, Tata Consultancy Services; and Santhosh T.G., Secretary, CIO Association. AKHILA EASWARAN (REPORTS ON PAGES 8 & 9)

CAQM's submissions in Supreme Court ignore increase in paddy burnt area in Punjab, Haryana

Nikhil M. Babu
NEW DELHI

The Central government-constituted Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) had information that the 'burnt area' of paddy fields in Punjab and Haryana increased and many farmers were burning stubble after satellites passed over the area to avoid detection, according to multiple sources and documents accessed by *The Hindu*.

The CAQM did not respond to calls and messages seeking comment.

According to data of both the Punjab government and the Centre, the 'burnt area' of paddy fields in Punjab and Haryana increased in 2023 compared with previous years.

Farmers burning stubble in a rice field at Mansa, Punjab. FILE PHOTO

While the CAQM – a statutory body – has informed the Supreme Court time and again that over the past couple of years there has been a "significant reduction" in stubble burning incidents, the increase in burnt area last year suggests that the actual number of stubble burning incidents could be higher than the official count.

"The CAQM was aware of this. Even though the data by different agencies showed that the burnt area has increased, the commission did not release it citing that the formulas used by the agencies were different," a government source said.

On January 29, 2024, the CAQM wrote to the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), which comes under ISRO, to develop a 'standard protocol' for estimating burnt area under paddy, as per official documents.

Satellite timings

The Minutes of the Meeting (MoM) of the first sitting of the committee formed for estimating it on March 7, 2024, read, "Dr. Sultan Singh (Director, Haryana Space Applications Centre) informed that many of the farmers in Haryana receive the information regarding the timing of satellite passes; hence they carry out the burning activity after the pass."

The minutes also quote Bhavana Sahay of the NRSC stating that "the observation of reduced burning incidents while burnt area is increasing over the years, may be due to the fact that farmers are well aware of satellite pass timings".

Despite this, the CAQM in seven affidavits or reports submitted to the Supreme Court from August 31 to November 16 this year did not refer to the increase in paddy burnt area or the concerns raised at the March 7 meeting.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 16

AAP gears up for Delhi election, puts out first list of 11 candidates

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday announced its first list of 11 candidates for the Delhi Assembly election scheduled for February next year. Both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress are yet to announce their candidates.

Out of the 11 candidates, six had switched to the ruling party in the last two months, three each from the BJP and the Congress. The party has dropped three of its sitting MLAs.

The names were announced after a meeting of AAP's political affairs committee, the highest decision-making body of the party, which is headed by party national convener Arvind Kejriwal.

AAP has been in power in Delhi since 2015 and had won 67 of the 70 seats in the 2015 Assembly poll and 62 seats in the 2020 poll.

'Set to launch campaign'

Addressing mediapersons, AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai said, "With the announcement of candidates, AAP has now geared up to accelerate its campaign for the Assembly election. Starting today, AAP is preparing to launch a massive campaign across the city. The details will be shared soon."

Mr. Rai said AAP remains confident that under the leadership of Mr. Kejriwal, the people will re-elect the party in the election to continue the momentum of progress and development in the Capital.

The AAP leader said the candidates were announced early as eight of these 11 constituencies currently do not have AAP MLAs. "To strengthen its campaign in these areas, the party has prioritised them in the first list."

The BJP and the Congress targeted AAP over giving tickets to leaders from other parties who had joined it as recently as Sunday. The BJP said six candidates being entrants from other parties showed that AAP is scared of "anti-incumbency". The Congress alleged that Mr. Kejriwal was desperate to save his party as three of the 11 candidates in the first list were "Congress discards".

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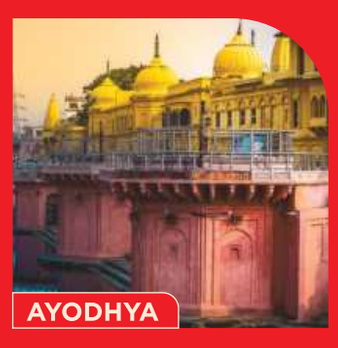
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City gets break from extreme air pollution; Centre declares staggered timings for its staff

Delhi's air quality improves to 'very poor' after staying in 'severe' and 'severe plus' zones for a week; Union govt. advises employees to use carpooling, public transport to minimise vehicular pollution

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

An anti-smog gun sprinkling water to curb dust on the roads. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

After nearly a week of breathing extremely polluted air, the city residents received some respite on Thursday with the pollution levels dropping marginally. The air quality is likely to remain the same for the next six days, according to official data.

However, the pollution levels were still several times higher than the threshold prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO). The national capital was ranked the second most polluted city in the country after Bihar's Hajipur, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

The CPCB found the level of PM2.5 (particulate matter that is 2.5 microns or less in diameter) in the city – to be 162.1 micrograms per cubic metre of air – over 10 times the WHO's permissible limit of 15 micrograms per cubic metre.

The Capital's overall 24-hour average AQI was 371 ('very poor') at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, down from 419 ('severe') a day earlier, as per the CPCB's daily bulletin.

The AQI is a measurement of air pollution on a scale of 0-500. A higher value suggests an increase in toxicity. The 'severe' category AQI affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases, as per the CPCB.

An AQI reading between 301 and 400 is considered 'very poor', 401 and 450 'severe', and 451 and 500 'severe plus'.

As per the latest Union Ministry of Earth Sciences data, the contribution of farm fires in the neighbouring States to PM2.5 in Delhi on November 19 was 22.1%.

Stubble burning and pollution from firecrackers, along with meteorological factors such as lower wind speed and drop in temperature, cause spikes in air pollution in Delhi and many other parts of north India every winter.

Meanwhile, the Centre on Thursday announced staggered working hours for its employees.

The move comes a day after the Delhi government ordered its offices – except those providing essential services – to operate at half their strength and announced staggered timings for its employees due to the pollution.

The Central government employees were advised to use carpooling and public transport to minimise vehicular pollution. "Offices can operate from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. or from 10 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.," read the order.

"These measures may be adopted by Ministries/ Departments/ organisations as per their functional requirements, ensuring that there is no adverse impact on efficiency and productivity in any manner," the order added.

Season's coldest night

Delhi continued to experience a drop in temperatures. The season's coldest night – 10.2 degrees Celsius – was recorded on Thursday, which was a degree lower than the minimum on Wednesday and two degrees lower than Tuesday's minimum.

The maximum temperature during the day, when the city continued to remain covered by a blanket of smog, was 27 degrees Celsius, 0.8 degrees below the normal for the season.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to settle at 27 degrees Celsius and 10 degrees Celsius respectively on Friday.

Candidates' list shows Kejriwal is in despair, has no confidence in party cadre, say BJP, Cong.

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Soon after the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) released its first list of 11 Assembly poll candidates, including six leaders who had recently switched over from other parties, the BJP and the Congress on Thursday alleged that AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal has lost confidence in his party cadre.

"AAP's list sends a clear message that Kejriwal is in despair," said Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva. "People had expected big names, including Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Satyendra Jain, Gopal Rai, and others, on the list. However, it is now evident that AAP is worried about anti-incumbency," he added.

Echoing the BJP's charge, Delhi Congress chief Devendra Yadav said, "The changes made by AAP are a clear indication that most of its MLAs are corrupt and did not do any work during their tenure."

Arvind Kejriwal with Sumesh Shokeen. FILE PHOTO

A source in the ruling party said the constituencies for which it had announced candidates were those where the party was "not in a very strong position". Of the 11 seats, AAP had lost eight to the BJP in the 2020 Assembly election. On the remaining seats, it decided to replace its legislators.

The source added that the party also factored in anti-incumbency while selecting the candidates. "A similar approach will be taken in the following lists," the source also said.

The list includes Brahm Singh Tanwar from Chhattarpur, Anil Jha from Kirari, and B.B. Tyagi from Laxmi Nagar. All of them recently quit the BJP to join AAP. Former Congress leaders Choudhary Zubair Ahmed, Veer Singh Dhingan, and Sumesh Shokeen were given tickets from the Seelampur, Seemapuri, and Matiala constituencies.

Sitting AAP MLAs who were denied tickets include Rituraj Jha from Kirari, Gulab Singh Yadav from Matiala, and Abdul Rahman from Seelampur.

Mr. Kejriwal has in several interactions with party workers hinted that AAP is likely to replace many of its sitting MLAs in the upcoming poll, which is due in February next year.

BJP protests over 'lavish' amount spent by Kejriwal on CM bungalow

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Several members of the BJP's Delhi unit held a protest over former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday.

The prostesters shouted slogans against the "extravagant expenditure" incurred on the renovation of Mr. Kejriwal's former residence, the Chief Minister House on 6, Flagstaff Road, Civil Lines, which the BJP has dubbed "Sheesh Mahal".

The BJP has alleged that the former CM spent an undue amount of taxpayers' money to "decorate" the CM House during his tenure.

Mr. Sachdeva said, "From day one, we have been saying that *Sheesh Mahal* is the result of embezzlement of crores of rupees from the public's hard-earned money."

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INBRIEF

Shivaji statue collapse case: HC grants bail to consultant

The Bombay High Court on Thursday granted bail to structural consultant Chetan Patil, who was arrested in connection with the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue at Rajkot Fort in Malvan in August. Mr. Patil was arrested on August 30 from Kolhapur after the 35-foot statue collapsed on August 26. A Single Judge Bench observed that no case was made out to implicate Mr. Patil in the case as he had not been appointed as the structural designer of the statue. Mr. Patil had only submitted a structural stability report for the pedestal of the statue, which was intact even after the collapse, the judge observed.

'No info on event to mark 2 years of Cong. govt. in H.P.'

Himachal Pradesh Minister Vikramaditya Singh on Thursday said he has no formal information about an event being organised to mark two years of the Congress government in the State. The event will be held on December 11 at Kahlur Sports Complex in Bilaspur and over 25,000 people are expected to participate, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had said on Sunday. Interacting with mediapersons, Mr. Singh said, "I have heard from the media that an event is being organised but I am yet to get formal information in this regard. We would definitely participate in the event and highlight the two years of achievement of the Congress government." PTI

Mamata links 'Taruner Swapna Scheme' fraud case to Jamtara gang

CM alleges that inter-State criminals have been coming into West Bengal and settling down to strengthen their nexus; 27 arrests made so far in the case, around 1,190 bank accounts frozen

Moyurie Som
KOLKATA

With the number of arrests in West Bengal's 'Taruner Swapna Scheme' fraud case increasing, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday alleged external links with criminals in other States belonging to the 'Jamtara gang' – a cybercrime group based in Jharkhand.

According to senior police officials, a total of 27 people have been arrested so far from across West Bengal, including Kolkata, in connection with the alleged scam that has affected hundreds of school students.

Taruner Swapna is a direct benefit transfer scheme aimed at bridging the digital divide among students of Classes 11 and 12 in the State by providing financial assistance for the purchase of smartphones and tablets. Under this scheme, beneficiaries receive ₹10,000 directly in their bank accounts.

Earlier this month, irregularities in the disbursement of funds under this scheme had come to the fore when hundreds of beneficiaries claimed that they did not receive the money or that their grants were withdrawn without their knowledge from elsewhere.

Empowering students: Taruner Swapna is a direct benefit transfer scheme aimed at bridging the digital divide among students of Classes 11 and 12 in West Bengal. FILE PHOTO: PTI

"So far, under the Taruner Swapna Scheme, the government has disbursed benefits worth ₹1,600 crore," the Chief Minister said. "Nearly ₹2 crore has been siphoned off by criminals, affecting around 1,900 beneficiaries across the State."

The Chief Minister also alleged that criminals belonging to the 'Jamtara gang' are involved in the fraud and claimed that these inter-State criminals have been coming into West Bengal and settling down to strengthen their nexus. Earlier, the police had also alleged the involvement of inter-State criminals in frauds surrounding the scheme.

Meanwhile, according to a senior official of the West Bengal Crime Investigation Department (CID), around 1,190 bank accounts with a total value of nearly ₹50 lakh have been frozen in connection with the case.

Most of the criminals being nabbed are from Uttar Dinajpur's Chopra and Islampur areas, police sources said. Arrests were also made from districts such as Malda and Cooch Behar.

CM targets Centre

The Chief Minister on Thursday also targeted the Centre, saying it has not done anything despite countries bordering the State facing tumultuous situations. While she did not make any reference to Bangladesh, she said her government has to tackle everything from the influx of fake Indian currency notes to cattle smuggling.

While the Trinamool Congress leadership blames the Border Security Force (BSF) for instances of smuggling across the India-Bangladesh border, sources in the BSF allege that the State government has not provided land for fencing of the border with Bangladesh.

The CM called for more checks along the borders, both with other countries and adjoining States.

Army officials pick up locals every day: Kishtwar sarpanch

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Army has ordered a probe into the incident 'to ascertain the facts', a spokesperson said

The Army on Thursday faced allegations of harassing locals and torturing five civilians in custody in Chenab Valley's Kishtwar district in the Jammu region, which has witnessed a rise in militancy and frequent gunbattles this year. The Army has ordered a probe into the allegations.

"Villages in my panchayat are the worst sufferers since militants killed two Village Defence Guards [on November 9]. There is hardly a day when 10 to 12 locals are not picked up, detained, and interrogated," Farooq Ahmed Kripak, sarpanch of Keshwan A, Kishtwar, told *The Hindu* over the phone.

The situation allegedly took an ugly turn on November 20 when four civilians were rounded up around 1 p.m. and released with injuries and torture marks on their bodies around 6 p.m.

"All the victims are less than or around 30 years old. Those who bore injury marks were Sajad Hussain, Mehraj Din, Ghulam Hassan, Mushtaq Ahmad, and Abdul Kabir," Mr. Kripak said.

The sarpanch said the villagers are in a state of shock after frequent detentions. He had met senior officials of the J&K police and an Army officer to address the issue on Wednesday.

"I was assured by the Army's top official that no one will be rounded up from now. However, I just received a call [on Thursday] from locals that 12 people have been summoned to the Army installation on Friday. One among those is over 65 years old," Mr. Kripak said.

A video has also gone viral showing injured civilians being shifted with "torture marks".

An Army spokesman said a probe was being launched "to ascertain the facts". "There are some reports on the alleged ill treatment of civilians during the conduct of an operation. An investigation is being launched to ascertain the facts. Necessary follow-up action will be ensured," the Army said.

U.P. govt. comes under fire over ad 'outsourcing' jobs in Gorakhpur civic body

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

It is a 'lateral entry' exercise aimed at ending reservation for marginalised sections, says Cong.

The Uttar Pradesh government faced criticism on Thursday over an advertisement for recruiting senior staff, including Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar, Revenue Inspector, and accountants, on an outsourcing basis under the Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation (GMC).

The advertisement, dated November 18 and issued by the Additional Municipal Commissioner of Gorakhpur, invited retired officials and staff to apply for nine outsourced posts: one Tehsildar, one Naib Tehsildar, two Revenue Inspectors, and five accountants. The advertisement did not mention reservation.

Opposition parties alleged that this outsourcing is an economic conspiracy against marginalised sections aimed at snatching away their constitutional right to reservation in jobs.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav targeted the BJP government, saying, "It would be better if the BJP outsources the entire government so that all its commissions are settled at one place... Jobs are not at all in the BJP's agenda. Outsourcing is an economic conspiracy against the PDA [*pichada*, Dalit, and *alpasankhyak*, meaning Backwards, Dalits, and minorities]."

Mr. Yadav demanded the immediate withdrawal of the proposal, urging the government not to snatch away the constitutional right of reservation in jobs.

The Congress described the proposal as a "lateral entry" exercise aimed at appointing BJP supporters and family members while ending reservation for marginalised sections. "The whole exercise of outsourcing is a lateral entry kind of thing, where constitutional provisions of reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), etc., will not apply," said Anil Yadav, U.P. Congress general secretary.

"The BJP aims to fill vacancies with their supporters and family members of leaders. The Congress opposes this advertisement," he said.

The Hindu reached out to the Municipal Commissioner of GMC but received no response till the time of going to press.

Court grants bail to lesbian couple in child abduction case

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has granted bail to a lesbian couple, arrested for allegedly kidnapping and trafficking a five-year-old girl. The court in its November 19 judgment observed that the actions of the couple were driven by their desire to have a child and become parents.

Passing the verdict, a single-judge Bench of Justice Manish Pitale observed, "The applicants [accused couple] have been able to show sufficient material to reach a prima facie conclusion that they can be said to be persons belonging to the said LGBTQ+ community. They have already suffered incarceration for about eight months. Such people are unfortunately subjected to ridicule in society and particularly in the confines of jail. In the light of the fact that they have made out a prima facie case in their favour, this court is inclined to allow the present application."

"Although a strong prima facie case is made out against the applicants [accused couple] that they indeed received the minor girl from the co-accused persons, there does not appear to be any material to show that the child was exploited," the court said.

The FIR against the couple was registered in March this year on a complaint by the child's parents in suburban Mumbai. Apart from the couple, three other persons are also accused in the case.

In their complaint, the parents said their child went missing on March 24. After the case was registered, the police traced the girl to the lesbian couple's house the next day.

Congress hits out at BJP for hosting event attended by son of lottery baron in UT

The Hindu Bureau
PUDUCHERRY

The Congress has criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party over an event hosted and attended by its legislators in Puducherry for which the son of lottery baron Santiago Martin was invited as the chief guest.

Addressing mediapersons, former Puducherry Chief Minister and Congress leader V. Narayanasamy said the BJP leadership should state whether its party legislator A. John Kumar was authorised to host the event involving Jose Charles Martin in Kamaraj Nagar constituency last Sunday.

Mr. Santiago Martin is being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). When the event was held in Puducherry, the ED was searching the business establishments of the 'lottery king' in other States. The event at Kamaraj Nagar was attended by three BJP legislators and the three Independents supporting the party in the Puducherry Assembly.

Former Puducherry CM V. Narayanasamy. S.S. KUMAR

The legislators should clarify their stand on their association with the BJP as there were reports that they intended to float a new party, Mr. Narayanasamy said. "The BJP national and local leaders should explain whether the event was held with their permission. A BJP legislator while speaking at the event has offered the Kamaraj Nagar seat to Jose Charles Martin. The MLAs should explain their connection to the lottery baron and his son. The legislators have brought disrepute to the entire political class in Puducherry with their conduct," the Congress leader said.

Corruption allegations

Mr. Narayanasamy also accused the All India N.R. Congress-BJP government in Puducherry of indulging in corruption, particularly in the construction of a new bus stand and housing tenements, and execution of underground sewage work. "We [Congress] are going to write to the Union Home Minister and the Finance Minister as the projects had been taken up under Smart Cities Mission," he said.

Delhi's weddings see families, friends, and 'Band, Baaja, Baaraat' gangs

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

In November 2017, Samiksha Srivastava was hosting her son's wedding at The Ashok, a five-star hotel in south Delhi's Chanakyapuri, when a young boy approached her and, without warning, grabbed her handbag and ran away. Before Ms. Srivastava could realise that she had been robbed of her Louis Vuitton bag with nearly ₹3.30 lakh in cash, a few credit cards, and her driver's licence, the boy was out of sight.

A year later, in December 2018, a similar incident occurred at a farmhouse in south Delhi's Chhattarpur, where Khan Bahadur was welcoming guests at his newly married son's reception.

However, this time, the crime was executed with a little more finesse by boys aged 12 and 18 who came to the venue dressed up as 'baaraatis' (wedding party guests).

'Even took selfies'

"Nothing about the boys aroused suspicion. They even clicked selfies with the guests," said Mr. Bahadur. Hours later, when his wife found her handbag missing, they knew whom to suspect.

"We found later that the younger boy had stepped onto the stage, stolen my wife's bag, and hid it in his coat. The two stayed back at the function for a good one and a half hours before making their way out," he recalled.

Both victims had fallen prey to a 'Band, Baaja, Baaraat' gang run by a 50-year-old man identified as Raj Kumar. The gangs get their name from the nature of their crime – targeting wedding functions of the rich in Delhi and adjoining cities in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

AI GENERATED IMAGE

Nabbed from hideout

When Delhi Police's Crime Branch arrested Kumar and his associates – Sumit, 30, Mohit, 19, and Karan, 30 – from their hideout near the Ghitorni metro station on Wednesday, the officers found that the gang had committed thefts at three events in the national capital during the ongoing wedding season.

On November 12, Sumit and Karan stole cash and valuables from two weddings in outer Delhi's Alipur. On November 17, they stole a bag filled with cash and valuables from another wedding function in Maidan Garhi, said the police.

> These gangs are run by people from Kadiya village in Madhya Pradesh. The gang leaders get into a contract with poor people and hire them during wedding seasons for a fixed sum
>
> **VIKRAM SINGH**
> DCP (Crime Branch)

"The 'Band, Baaja, Baaraat' gangs almost exclusively comprise people from Kadiya village in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh district. The leaders of these gangs get into an *anubandh* or a social contract with poor people and hire them during the wedding season for a fixed sum," said DCP (Crime Branch) Vikram Singh.

He added, "They train the recruits in how to blend in at high-profile weddings and steal valuables, such as handbags and jewellery, from the guests. Each family that gets into such an arrangement makes between ₹50,000 to ₹60,000 a season."

The senior officer added that Kumar taught young boys how to identify and steal bags containing jewellery or cash at weddings and directed the operations from a rented taxi outside the venue using a cell phone. The minors were instructed to bring the stolen valuables to Kumar, who would then distribute them among the gang members.

Court attaches Bikaner House in Delhi to settle dues of private company

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has ordered the attachment of Bikaner House, which is owned by the Nokha Municipal Council in Rajasthan, after it failed to pay arbitral award of ₹50.31 lakh to a private company. Bikaner House is located on the India Gate hexagon. It was built as a palace of the Maharaja of Bikaner.

Arbitral award

District Judge Vidya Prakash in the September 18 order noted that the 2020 arbitral award in favour of Enviro Infra Engineers Private Limited has attained finality after an appeal preferred by the Nagar Palika was dismissed earlier this year. The judge noted the non-compliance of the court's directions.

"Keeping in view the fact that the judgment debtor had failed to comply with the direction for furnishing an affidavit of their assets despite grant of repeated opportunities, the court, while agreeing with the submissions made on behalf of the decree holder, finds it a fit case for issuance of warrants of attachment against immovable property of Bikaner House, New Delhi," the judge said.

The court passed the order on an application seeking enforcement of the arbitral award passed by tribunal in January 2020.

Published by Nirmala Lakshman and Printed by S. Ramanujam at HT Media Ltd. Plot No. 8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201306, on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

HC refuses to stay trial against Kejriwal in excise policy case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The ED has alleged that Kejriwal was engaged with key accused individuals. FILE PHOTO

The Delhi High Court on Thursday declined to stay the trial proceedings against former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case.

However, Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri sought a response from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Mr. Kejriwal's plea challenging a trial court's order taking cognisance of a chargesheet in the case.

The court will hear the matter on December 20.

According to the CBI and the ED, "irregularities were committed" while modifying the now-scrapped excise policy and "undue favours" were extended to the licence holders.

The ED has alleged that Mr. Kejriwal was engaged with key accused individuals, urging them to collaborate with others involved in the case.

In his plea, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener argued that the trial court took cognisance of the chargesheet without any sanction for his prosecution as he was a public servant when the alleged offence was committed.

However, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, told the court that a sanction was obtained to prosecute Mr. Kejriwal and he would be filing an affidavit.

On November 12, the High Court sought the ED's response on another plea filed by Mr. Kejriwal, who had challenged summons issued to him.

Mr. Kejriwal, arrested by the ED in March 2024, was granted bail by the Supreme Court on September 13.

SP demands repolling in 4 seats under supervision of paramilitary forces

Party says limits of injustice crossed during Nov. 20 bypolls in U.P. as Muslim voters were 'prevented from casting votes at gunpoint'; video evidence of illegal acts by police in public domain: SP leader

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Thursday demanded repoll in Meerapur, Kundarki, Katehari and Sisamau Assembly segments alleging that the administration crossed all limits of injustice during the polling on November 20.

The SP added that the repolling should be held only under the supervision of paramilitary forces.

"The byelections held in Uttar Pradesh yesterday were between the Samajwadi Party and the district officials and police officers of the respective areas, and not between the SP and the BJP. The kind of atrocities the police did yesterday, especially in Meerapur, Kundarki, Sisamau and Katehari, is a warning bell for democracy. Excesses have happened everywhere, but in these areas the administration has crossed all limits of decorum. In Meerapur, Kundarki and Sisamau, Muslim voters were prevented from casting their votes at gunpoint. These elections should be cancelled and repoll held under the supervision of paramilitary forces," said party general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav.

A police officer and women voters during the Assembly byelection in Meerapur on Wednesday. ANI

'Discriminatory tactics'

Other leaders also alleged that discriminatory tactics aimed at preventing party sympathisers from voting and even during preparation of elections were used.

"Since the beginning of the bypoll process, government employees belonging to the Muslim and Yadav communities were removed. In the bypolls, the administration put pressure on local leaders, village-level representatives and others, to support the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidates. Video evidence of illegal acts, threatening by police is in public domain. Hence, we demand repolling in these seats," said Rajya Sabha member Javed Ali Khan.

Nine Assembly seats – including Sisamau in Kanpur, Katehari in Ambedkar Nagar, Kundarki in Moradabad, Ghaziabad in Ghaziabad district, Majhwan in Mirzapur, Karhal in Mainpuri district, Khair in Aligarh, Phulpur in Prayagraj and Meerapur in Muzaffarnagar district – went for bypolls on November 20.

Gurugram man held for pointing gun at boy, let off on bail

Press Trust of India
GURUGRAM

The incident, which was captured on CCTV, took place in the DLF Phase 3 area on Tuesday, police officials said

The police have arrested a 35-year-old liquor businessman for allegedly pointing a revolver at a 12-year-old boy during an altercation between children playing football at a housing society park in Gurugram, officials said on Thursday.

The incident, which was captured on CCTV, took place in the DLF Phase 3 area.

Revolver seized

The police have seized the licensed revolver of the businessman, Prateek Sachdeva, who was later released on bail.

According to police officials, the incident took place on Tuesday at 5.30 p.m. in the Lagoon Apartments' park where some children were playing football.

An altercation broke out among them and one of them returned home and told his father about the fight. The enraged man took his revolver, went to the park, and pointed it at a 12-year-old boy, the officials said.

The video also showed Mr. Sachdeva's wife coming to the park and asking her husband to leave. After the incident, the boy, who appeared very scared, was sent to a relative's house, the officials added.

FIR filed

On the complaint of the boy's father, an FIR was registered against Mr. Sachdeva under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Arms Act at DLF Phase 3 Police Station.

"We arrested the accused and seized his licensed revolver. He was released on bail after he joined the investigation. A probe is under way," a senior officer said.

Timings
DELHI

FRIDAY, NOV. 22		
RISE	06:50	SET 17:26
RISE	23:43	SET 12:35
SATURDAY, NOV. 23		
RISE	06:50	SET 17:25
RISE	00:00	SET 13:06
SUNDAY, NOV. 24		
RISE	06:51	SET 17:25
RISE	00:37	SET 13:34

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	27	10
Safdarjang	27	10
Palam	25	12

Delhi Palam Today
24°C Moderate fog and mist will occur in cod morning. severe pollution level to continue. The weather will be dry and cold.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
23°C The weather will be dry. Shallow to moderate fog with severe pollution level to prevail. Night will be cold with mist and shallow fog.

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Kolkata air quality moderate in November, industrial cities face challenges: report

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The report calls for enhanced measures, including stricter enforcement of emission controls, to tackle pollution in industrial centres

An analysis of the air quality of prominent cities in West Bengal has revealed that Kolkata maintained 'moderate' quality, Siliguri recorded the cleanest air, but industrial cities Durgapur and Asansol faced pollution challenges in the first two weeks of November.

Targeted plans

"While Kolkata maintained moderate air quality with an average PM 2.5 level of 61g/m³, industrial cities like Asansol (95.2 g/m³) and Durgapur (96.2 g/m³) fell into the poor and upper satisfactory categories, highlighting the need for targeted interventions in industrial and urban zones," a recent analysis of the State's air quality pointed out.

The latest analysis was done by the Atlas AQ platform of Respirer Living Sciences which has highlighted a diverse air quality scenario across West Bengal during the early winter period from November 3-16.

The findings indicate a clear divide between cities benefiting from effective urban management and those struggling with the impacts of industrial and vehicular emissions, a statement said.

The report calls for enhanced measures to tackle pollution in urban and industrial centres including stricter enforcement of emission controls in industries, improved vehicular emission standards, and the expansion of green spaces in polluted regions. "The mixed trends in West Bengal demonstrate both progress and the need for immediate action. By focusing on industrial hotspots and urban infrastructure, the State can make significant strides toward cleaner air for all," it said.

Region-specific

Respirer Living Science founder and CEO Ronak Sutaria said these trends showcase the importance of region-specific strategies to tackle pollution.

"While Kolkata's air quality highlights moderate improvement, the challenges in industrial hubs like Asansol underline the pressing need for stricter pollution controls and sustainable urban development," he said.

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THE HINDU GROUP
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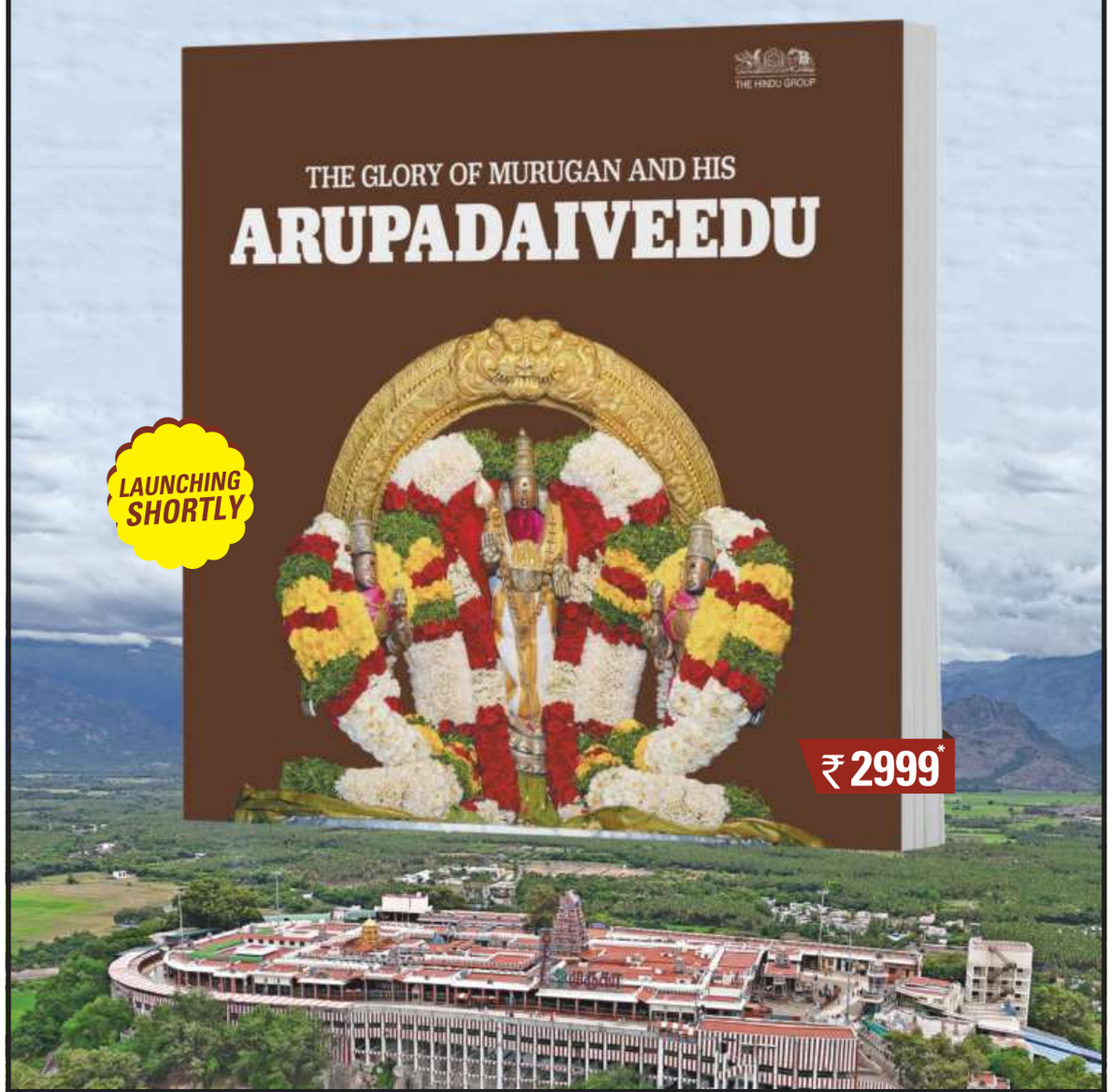
He is a deity worshipped across the world but is especially dear to the people of Tamil Nadu, which has numerous temples for Him. Most celebrated among them are his Arupadaiveedu - six abodes that speak of His beauty, valour and compassion. The coffee-table book - 'The Glory of Murugan and His Arupadaiveedu,' - by *The Hindu* Group of Publications, comes with articles and about 300 visuals, which will be a treasure for Kandan devotees.


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INBRIEF

Tirupati airport gets more quota of Srivani tickets

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has announced an increase in the daily quota of Srivani darshan tickets issued at Tirupati airport. The ticket allotment has been raised from 100 to 200. The tickets are issued upon presentation of a valid boarding pass by travellers. The Srivani Trust tickets offer special darshan privileges for devotees.

A.P. Assembly resolves to set up HC Bench in Kurnool

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution for establishment of a permanent Bench of the High Court in Kurnool. Speaker Ayyanna Patrudu declared the resolution, which was moved by Minister of Law and Justice N. Md. Farooq, as unanimously passed. Calling the setting up of the High Court Bench in the Rayalaseema region a significant step towards decentralisation, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said the government would not shift the institution of the Lokayukta, State Human Rights Commission and some tribunals situated in Kurnool.

Artistes from 12 countries to take part in Telangana event

About 1,500 artistes from 12 countries will be performing in 120 cultural programmes during the four-day 'Lokmanthan - Bhagyanagar 2024' event, which will be formally inaugurated by President Draupadi Murmu at Shilpa Kala Vedika in Madhapur, Hyderabad, on Friday. Prominent artistes and national award winning celebrities will be taking part in the cultural extravaganza, to be attended by 2,500 delegates.

Investigate Kerala Minister's remarks on Constitution: HC

Saji Cherian is alleged to have made public statements that insulted the Constitution at a CPI(M) meet in 2022; while Opposition parties demand his resignation, CPI(M) State secretary rules it out

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has directed the State government to order a Crime Branch probe into the incident in which Minister for Culture Saji Cherian is alleged to have made public statements that insulted the Constitution at a CPI (M) meeting at Mallapally in Pathanamthitta district in 2022.

The court on Thursday quashed the order issued by a Magistrate court closing the case on the grounds that a probe beyond that had been done by the police was not needed. It further took note of how the case was closed even without waiting for the outcome of the forensic examination of the visuals. Neither were the statements of journalists who were present at the site sought. In this situation, it was improper that the magistrate court closed the case, although there were references in Mr. Cherian's speech that insulted the Constitution, the court noted. A conclusive and fast probe must be done in the case, it said.

Saji Cherian

It said the findings of the investigation officer that Mr. Cherian did not seem to have any intention to insult the Constitution were contrary to facts. In this situation, the State Police Chief must order a Crime Branch probe in the case, the court added.

Petitioner Baiju Noel, an advocate, had sought further probe in the case.

Mr. Cherian, who stepped down as Minister following the controversy, was later reinstated into the State Cabinet.

The High Court's order has spurred the Opposition to demand Mr. Cherian's immediate resignation.

Mr. Cherian has "lost the moral and legal right to hold office", said the Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan.

Kerala BJP president K. Surendran sought the ouster of Mr. Cherian form the State Cabinet and read the High Court order as a slap across the face of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan "in whose interest Mr. Cherian was reinstated into the Cabinet".

Meanwhile, Mr. Cherian ruled out resigning from his post. Speaking to reporters in Thiruvananthapuram, he said a single Bench of the High Court had ordered the Crime Branch inquiry without hearing his side.

CPI(M) State secretary M.V. Govindan ruled out the possibility of Mr. Cherian's resignation.

India to host global meet of cooperatives in Delhi from Nov. 25

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India is all set to host the global conference of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) next week in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the 'United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2025' at the conference on Monday.

First time in the 130-year-long history of the ICA, the premier body for global cooperative movement, with the initiative of IFFCO, the ICA General Assembly and Global Cooperative Conference will be hosted by India. The event is scheduled to be held from November 25 to 30.

Addressing a press conference, Cooperation Secretary Ashish Kumar Bhutani informed that around 3,000 delegates were expected to attend the event and out of that 1,000 would be delegates from foreign countries.

Bhutan Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay and Fiji Deputy Prime Minister Manoa Kamikamica will also attend the event as esteemed guests.

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah will attend the event on November 25. He will chair the inaugural session of the conference as chief guest.

Will Pak. participate?

Asked if Pakistan is participating in the event, the Secretary said, "More than 100 countries are participating. We have received request from many countries for participation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the 'United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2025' at the conference. FILE PHOTO

There are approvals and protocols required for some countries. The protocols are being followed by the Ministry of External Affairs regarding allowing representatives from such countries to participate in the event."

Of all cooperatives globally, Mr. Bhutani said, 25% were in India and the event would give an opportunity to showcase the might of Indian cooperatives.

IFFCO Managing Director U.S. Awasthi said the event would be carbon-neutral and 10,000 peepal trees had been planted across the country, he added.

He said the theme of the event would be 'Cooperatives Build Prosperity of All', and the sub-themes would be - Enabling Policy and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems; Nurturing Purposeful Leadership to Create Prosperity for All; Reaffirming The Cooperative Identity; Shaping the Future: Towards Realising Prosperity for all in 21st Century.

KTR slams Cong., BJP for deals with Adani

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao has observed that the association of the Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with the Adani Group is not only bringing disrepute to the country but is poised to be a bad omen, following indictment of Group chairman Gautam Adani and others in a bribery case in a U.S. court.

He sought to know from the Congress government in Telangana as to how such a dubious group would be allowed to make investments in the State.

'Make deals public'

Mr. Rama Rao asked how much the Adani Group had offered the bigwigs of the State government for establishing a cement unit at Ramannapet and how much share he would be getting in the Musi Riverfront Development Project. He demanded that the government cancel the permissions given to Ambuja Cement unit at Ramannapet and also to make public all deals made with the Adani Group.

He sought to know the "shares of *bade bhai, chhote bhai*, Adani *bhai* and party high command" in the plans to exploit resources in Telangana.

Separately, BRS MLC K. Kavitha has raised questions over the selective justice of the Centre and its efforts to shield Adani Group.

In a social media post she stated: "They propagate Akhand Bharat but deliver selective justice! Political opponents are arrested without evidence and put on trial for months, while Mr. Gautam Adani walks free despite repeated and grave allegations".

What is stopping the Union government from acting in the present issue, she asked.

Kerala CM slams Centre for stonewalling State's demands for fund release for Wayanad

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told Kerala MPs at a meeting on Thursday that the Centre had repeatedly ignored the State's plea for urgent financial assistance to rehabilitate the people of landslides-ravaged Wayanad district.

Mr. Vijayan said the State had sought an initial assistance of ₹1,202 crore and submitted the demand in the requisite format within the mandated 100 days of the disaster. However, no aid seemed forthcoming. In contrast, the Centre had given disaster aid to other States without they raising a demand.

Pinarayi Vijayan

Mr. Vijayan said despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting Wayanad, the Centre was yet to declare the landslides "a disaster of severe nature".

The lack of the declaration had precluded the State from seeking assistance from international agencies or funds from the Centre's disaster relief pool. The declaration would give a legal basis to banks to write off the debts incurred by people hit by the landslides.

Mr. Vijayan said the Centre has also asked Kerala to repay ₹817.8 crore viability gap funding approved for the Vizhinjam international seaport project. He asked the MPs to exert pressure on the Centre to get the VGF as a non-repayable grant. He also asked them to demand for the ₹620 crore Global City project in Kochi as well as to include 109 coastal panchayats of the State in the CRZ-2 category as per the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019.

Picture perfect

Back to work: On World Fisheries Day, a group of fishermen venture into the sea in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. World Fisheries Day is observed on November 21 every year to highlight the importance of sustainable fishing and livelihoods of fishing communities. K.R. DEEPAK

'Karnataka's software exports cross ₹4.11 lakh cr. in 2023-24'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Karnataka's software and services exports crossed ₹4.11 lakh crore during fiscal 2023-24 (March 2024) from ₹3.2 lakh crore a year ago, marking a 27% year-on-year growth, Minister for IT&BT Priyank Kharge said here on Thursday quoting Software Technology Parks of India data.

With this, the State's individual share in the country's total software exports had further increased from last year's 42%, he said.

IT exports from beyond Bengaluru too have grown substantially in FY'24 with tier 2 and tier 3 cities contributing at least ₹10,000 crore, the Minister added.

IT services exports from STPI-registered units for the whole country crossed ₹9 lakh crore in the 2024 financial year.

Later, speaking at the closure of 27th edition of Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS), the Minister said that the State's GCC (global capability centres) policy, a first in the country, would trigger quantum growth in GCC ecosystem, bring in 500 additional GCCs, create over 3.5 lakh new jobs and contribute $50 billion to Karnataka's economy by 2029.

The 2024 edition of the tech exposition witnessed the launch of Nipuna in collaboration with IBM, Intel, Microsoft, NVIDIA, BFSI Consortium and Accenture to drive skilling and workforce transformation.

Through these MoUs, the State is expected to train 1,00,000 youngsters in a year.

Rock-cut footprints, human figure dating back to Megalithic period unearthed at Kerala's Kanhirapoil

C.P. Sajit
KASARAGOD

A remarkable archaeological discovery has come to light at Kanhirapoil in Madikkai grama panchayat of Kerala where 24 pairs of prehistoric footprints and a human figure have been found carved into rock on private property. Experts believe these carvings date back to the Megalithic period, providing a fascinating glimpse into ancient culture.

The find was first reported by local archaeology enthusiast Satheesan Kaliyanam recently, following which archaeologist Professor Ajith Kumar and history Professor Nandakumar Koroth confirmed its significance during a site visit.

Archaeological discovery: Megalithic era rock-cut footprints discovered at a private property in Kanhirapoil in Kasaragod.

The carvings, made with iron tools, include footprints varying in size from six to 10 inches, suggesting representations of both children and adults. At the end of the footprints, a human figure has been intricately etched, accompanied by four circular pits around it.

Mr. Kumar said that the footprints represent souls of dead people and have been carved out to honour them. All the footprints are pointing towards the west. However, local people believe these footmarks to be that of a goddess.

He further said these carvings bear similarities to prehistoric rock art found in Avalakki Pera in Udupi district in Karnataka. Notably, this discovery aligns with earlier findings in north Kerala, including a temple decoration at Erikulam Valiyapara in Kasaragod, a running tiger near Bangalam Government Higher Secondary School in Neeleswaram, human figures in Cheemeni Ariyittapara, bull figures at Ettukudukka in Kannur, and the celebrated carvings at Edakkal Caves in Wayanad.

He said the 2,000-year-old rock art sheds light on the lives and artistic expressions of early inhabitants of Madikkai grama panchayat and Kerala as a whole.

These carvings and artefacts found here have long been attributed to the Megalithic period, indicating a shared cultural heritage in prehistoric north Kerala, Mr. Kumar said. He added that this discovery reinforces the historical significance of the area and invites further exploration into the region's ancient past.

Curbs imposed on annual temple jathra in Bandipur Tiger Reserve

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Karnataka Forest Department has imposed restrictions on the annual jathra of Beladakuppe Sri Mahadeshwaraswamy Temple which is in the core area of Bandipur Tiger Reserve. This year's event will take place from November 23 to 25.

S. Prabhakaran, Director, Bandipur Tiger Reserve, said, "the ban on entry of private vehicles, which came into force a few years ago, will continue".

Meanwhile, temple trustees said they expected nearly one lakh devotees to take part in the rituals.

The situation had come to such a pass in recent years that the core critical area of the tiger reserve used to resemble the site of a rural mela as temporary kiosks and stalls dealing with eatables, toys, etc., stages with colourful lights and loudspeakers used to be installed.

Though most of it has been banned over the years, what is of concern to conservation activists is that the movement of many people inside the critical area continues and this causes disturbance to the wildlife habitat.

Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department

Annexure "A"

Ph.01908-224598,Fax:224584, e-mail:se-jog-hp@nic.in

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Superintending Engineer, JNR Circle HP. PWD. Joginder Nagar on behalf of Governor Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system, fromthe eligible and approved contractors registered with HPPWD/ CPWD/ P&T, Railways/other state/Central government agencies for the works as detailed in table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Starting Date of downloading Bid.	Earnest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid.
1.	C/O link road Kumarda to Madho Nagar (Uttrala to Nain Bhunked Road km 0/00-1/845 (SH : - FC,Passing Places, R/Walls, Missing CD work, GSB, WBM-II.WBM-III, Tarring work, CC Pavement, Side Drain and Parapets, including 5-yearroutine Maintenance after completion of work. (UNDER NABARD RIDF-XXX)	Rs. 2,46,73,349/-	28.11.2024	Rs. 4,93,500/-	12.12.2024

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in.

Superintending Engineer,
JNR Circle HP PWD, Joginder Nagar
e-mail ID:se-jog-hp@nic.in
M.No.01908-224598; Fax No.01908-224584
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HP / 3398/24-25 him suchna avam jan sampark

योजना एवं विकास विभाग

बिहार सरकार

पिन नं0 –854202
Email Id - laeo2banmankhi@gmail.com

कार्यालय, कार्यपालक अभियंता,
स्थानीय क्षेत्र अभियंत्रण संगठन,
कार्य प्रमडल–02,बनमनखी पूर्णियाँ।

आवश्यक सूचना :–12/2024-25

एत्द द्वारा सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय के द्वारा आमंत्रित ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं0–11(SBD)/2024–25 जो विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित हुआ है, जिसका **PR.No.011721 (Planning) 2024-25** है के ग्रुप संख्या 05 एवं 12 को अपरिहार्य कारणवश रद्द (Cancel) की जा रही है एवं शेष ग्रुप संख्या यथावत रहेगी।

निविदा की शेष शर्तें भी यथावत रहेगी।

कार्यपालक अभियंता,
स्थानीय क्षेत्र अभियंत्रण संगठन,
कार्य प्रमण्डल –02, बनमनखी, पूर्णियाँ

PR- 012953 (Planning) 2024-25

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

MUZAFFARPUR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

MUZAFFARPUR, BIHAR- 842003
(Department of Science, Technology & Technical Education, Govt. of Bihar)

Govt. of Bihar
Letter No. 10/2024-25/Muzaffarpur

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender Reference No.:- MIT/Equip/10/2024-25

1. M.I.T. Muzaffarpur has been established under the Department of Science, Technology and Technical Education, Government of Bihar to cater to the needs of technical education. M.I.T. Muzaffarpur intendment to procure Lab Equipment as per DSTTE Letter No.- वि0प्रा0 (10) विविध–01/20249/3934 Dated 05.09.2024 of the following department in the premises of M.I.T. Muzaffarpur as mentioned in the Tender documents:-
   I. Lab Equipment of Electrical Engineering
   ii.Lab Equipment of Mechanical Engineering
   iii.Lab Equipment of Biomedical and Robotics Engineering
   iv. Lab Equipment of Pharmacy
2. "The contract will be signed between The Principal, M.I.T. Muzaffarpur and the successful agency/bidder.
3. To participate in the e-tendering process, the bidder/agency are required to get themselves registered with eproc2.bihar.gov.in portal.
4. M.I.T. Muzaffarpur invites bids from eligible entities as per the tender documents. No tender will be accepted after closing date and time in any circumstances.
5. Schedule of Events:

Sl.No.	Event Description	Timeline
1	Last date & time of downloading the RFP	Till 05/12/24 till 5:00 PM on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
2	Pre-Bid meeting	27/11/24 at 11:00 AM
3	Submission (upload) of online bidding document	05/12/24 till 5:00 PM on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
4	Submission of EMD	Offline by 02/12/24 to The Principal Office, M.I.T. Muzaffarpur
5	Opening of Technical Bid	on 06/12/24 on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
6	Opening of Financial Bid	After Evaluation of Technical Bid on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7	Pre-bid meeting venue	The Conference Room, M.I.T. Muzaffarpur
8	Contact Person	The Principal, M.I.T. Muzaffarpur Email:- principal@mitmuzaffarpur.org
9	Method of Selection	Least Cost Selection (LCS) quoted among technically qualified bidder/agency.

Note:-1. Interested bidders may obtain further information about this Notice inviting Tender (NIT) from the office of M.I.T. Muzaffarpur.
1. No tender will be accepted after closing dated and time in any circumstances.
2. For more details visit- https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in/

For further details please visit : **www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar**

Principal
M.I.T. Muzaffarpur

PR- 012928 (Sci. & Tech.) 2024-25

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

Online open E-tender are invited by Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS)/N.E. Railway Loco Shed Gonda acting for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work.

Tender Notice No. & Description: Tender No.- LS-GD-2024-Modify-CBC "Modification of CBC coupler operating handle from bottom operated to top operated as per RDSO modification." Estimated Cost (in Rs.): ₹ 7,90,825.86, Earnest Money (in Rs.): ₹ 15,800.00, Period of Completion: 24 Months.

Tender Notice No. & Description: Tender No.- LS-GD-2024-Repair-Cab_AC, "Repair and maintenance of roof mounted Cab AC during minor and major schedule of electric locos of GD and GKP sheds for 02 years." Estimated Cost (in Rs.): ₹ 56,63,966.14, Earnest Money (in Rs.): ₹ 1,13,300.00, Period of Completion: 24 Months.

Offers can be uploaded by tenderer, up to 15:00 Hrs. on 13/12/2024. Detailed information, minimum eligibility criteria, Terms and conditions regarding this e-tender are available at website **www.ireps.gov.in** Tenderer should check any correction/corrigendum related to this e-tender notice on website before uploading their offer.

ADEE/TRS, Loco Shed Gonda
CPRO/Elect-177

Never travel on roof and foot boards.

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

noida

Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible firms/contractors for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: **www.noidaauthorityonline.in** & **https://etender.up.nic.in**. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

S. No.	JOB NO.	Name of Work	Amount
1	07/DGM(NTC)/SM(NTC)/2024-25	P/L Thermoplastic paint and road safety items on FNG road from parthala gol chakker to NH-9, Noida.	6083768.00
2	12/DGM(NTC)/SM(NTC)/2024-25	P/L Thermoplastic paint in internal road Phase-II, Noida.	7022380.00
3	13/DGM(NTC)/SM(NTC)/2024-25	P/L Thermoplastic paint and road safety item on elevated road X-ing to Hosiyarpur T-point between Sector-53 and 33, 34 and Abode X-ing Sector-54 T-point between Sector-22 and 24, Noida.	5684078.00
4	18/GM/SM (NTC)/2024-25	P/L Thermoplastic paint and road safety item on 60 mtr. Wide road Samsung T-Point to DSC Road T-Point, Noida.	5910320.00
5	20/GM/SM (NTC)/2024-25	P/F Overhead Cantilever/Gantry direction board on X-ing Sector-76, 77, 116 & 117, Noida.	6765607.34

Which can be uploaded from **21.11.2024** to **27.11.2024** up to **5.00 PM.** Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on date **28.11.2024** at **11.00 AM.**

''महत्वपूर्ण सूचना–

नवीन ओखला औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में शासन से स्वीकृत मास्टर प्लान एवं उत्तर प्रदेश औद्योगिक क्षेत्र विकास अधिनियम, 1976 के विपरीत प्लॉटिंग या किसी भी प्रकार का अन्य निर्माण पूरी तरह अवैध है। जनसामान्य को आगाह किया जाता है कि इस प्रकार की अवैध कॉलोनियों एवं अवैध निर्मित भवनों में भूखण्डों/अपार्टमेंट/दुकान/गोडाऊन/फार्महाउस की खरीद–फरोख्त से पूर्णतः सचेत रहें तथा कॉलोनाईजर के लुभावने एवं भ्रामक विज्ञापनों से बचे। साथ ही नौएडा अधिसूचित क्षेत्र के हिण्डन एवं यमुना नदियों के डूब क्षेत्र **(Flood Plain Zone)** में अनधिकृत/अवैध प्लॉट एवं फार्म हाऊसों के कारोबार में संलिप्त भूमाफियाओं के चंगुल में न फंसे।''

General Manager (NTC)
Noida

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA — TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UHBVN	CONVERSION OF EXISTING OVERHEAD 11 KV AND LT ELECTRIC LINES TO TRENCHLESS UNDERGROUND 11 KV AND LT CABLE SYSTEM, RING MAIN UNIT RMU MAIN FEEDER AND SERVICE PILLARS COMPATIBLE WITH SCADA ETC. AT DISTRICT HEAD QUARTER OF ROHTAK CIRCLE IN UHBVN	CLOSING DATE 05.12.2024	10 LACS	www.uhbvn.org.in	01722570431 cepdc@uhbvn.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.etenders.hry.nic.in

SAMVAD - 13/2025/40/30451/I/199/7

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Short term E-Procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer HP PWD Division Nalagarh Distt. Solan HP on behalf of Governor of HP invites the online bids on percentage rate, in electronic/ nic tendering system, in 2 cover system for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors.firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time Allowed	Cost of Form	Eligibility of Contractor
1.	A/R & M/O to HPPWD Rest House at Nalagarh (SH:- Providing and repair of various Rest House Articles in HPPWD Rest House at Nalagarh.	1,61,512/-	3230/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
2.	C/O road from kawaj Khad to manlog Khurd harizan basti Nisal tikkar Dharwala harizan basti Jaghed to Dalchhamb km 0/0 to 2/800 (SH:- C/O 900mm dia NP-2 HPC at RD 2/600 & 3 mtr. Slab Culvert at 1/500) Under SCDP) **2022-307-1695**	12,20,092/-	24,400/-	Three Month	500/-	C & D
3.	C/O link road Bhaned ki Johari to Devraja mandir km 0/0 to 1/00 (SH:- C/O R/wall and V-shape Drain at various Rds between km 0/200 to 0/500) **Under MNP 2020-307-1272**	4,26,718/-	8600/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
4.	C/O link road Ramshehar Chamdar to Village Bithun km 0/0 to0/300 (SH:- ROFD, 900mm dia HPC, Gr-1 & V-shape Drain at RD 0/0 to 0/300 Under **MNP 2022-307-3807.**	9,42,077/-	18,900/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
5.	C/O link road Panighat to Rug Gram Panchyat Diggal km 0/0 to 0/300 (SH:- P/L Gr-I, C/O B/wall at RD 0/250 to 0/270 & V-shape Drain at RD between km 0/0 to 0/300) Under **MNP- 2022-307-89).**	3,34,044/-	6700/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
6.	C/O link road Diggal to odda km 0/0 to 2/00 (SH:- ROFD work at RD 0/800 to 1/800, 900mm dia HPC at RD 1/325 & 1/610 & R/wall, B/wall at RD between 0/400 to 2/00) Under **MNP 2020-307-744)**	11,80,983/-	23,700/-	Three Month	500/-	C & D
7.	C/O link road Panighat to karol km 0/0 to 0/800 (SH:- ROFD work at RD 0/0 to 0/500, 900mm dia HPC at RD 0/210 and 0/400) Under **MNP 2017-307-455).**	4,08,948/-	8200/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
8.	R/R of rain damages on Diggal Datla road 0/0 to 5/700 (SH:- C/O B/wall at Km 1/700 to 1/740).	1,39,825/-	2800/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
9.	A/R & M/O SKRN road in km 60/500 to 94/00 (SH:- C/O R/wall at Km 83/800 to 83/820) Police Station Ramshehar	3,90,322/-	7810/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
10.	C/O link road pandal to Jokhati nerli Bayi Ram nath kaushal to Dev Raja mandir km 0/0 to 0/800 (SH:- ROFD by R/wall at KM 0/510 to 0/515 and 0/545 to 0/560). Under **MNP 2020-307-406**	3,53,247/-	7100/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
11.	C/O link road to village Bhalsi km 0/0 to 3/00 (SH:- C/O V-shape drain with edge wall at various Rds between 0/0 to 1/00) Under SCCP 2010-307-800).	4,87,626/-	9800/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
12.	R/R SKRN road in km 60/500 to 94/00 (SH:- P/L wire crate in R/wall at RD 67/ 820 to 67/835).	3,82,133/-	7700/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
13.	R/R of rain damages on SKRN road in km 60/500 to 94/00 (SH:- C/O B/wall at KM 71/140 to 71/155 and R/wall at Km 71/400 to 71/415).	3,73 459/-	7500/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D
14.	C/O SKRN road to Ambedkar Bhawan to Village Dhoor helipad Bharmna to mahadev jandu diggal road km 0/0 to 3/00 (SH:- C/O 900mm dia HPC at RD 1/500, V- shape Drain at RD 0/300 to 0/990 and P/L Gr-II, Gr-III and Tarring at RD 1/200 to 1/800) under MNP.	19,55,582/-	39,200/-	Three Month	500/-	C & D
15.	C/O link road Ghared to beh kolian km 0/0 to 1/800 (P/L Gr-II etc).	6,96,886/-	14000/-	Six Month	350/-	C & D
16.	C/O rain shelter at Deoli on Panjehra Deoli road at Km 5/00.	1,69,757/-	3400/-	Three Month	350/-	C & D

Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website https://hptenders.gov.in. Bidder would be requird to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized certifying authorities (CA) "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: https://hptenders.gov.in. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

2. Key dates.

1.	Date of Online Publication	21-11-2024 10:00 AM
2.	Document Download Start Date	21-11-2024 11:00 AM
3.	Bid Submission Start and End Date	21-11-2024 at 11:00 AM to 30-11-2024 at 10:00 AM
4.	Physical Submission of receipt of EMD and cost of tender Document and other document	30-11-2024 at 10:30 AM
5.	Date of Opening of Bid	30-11-2024 at 11:00 AM

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in.

Executive Engineer
Nalagarh Division
HPPWD Nalagarh

HP / 3387/24-25 **HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK** **(On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh**

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

(INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
(e-Procurement Module)

The Executive Engineer, Chamba Division, HPPWD Chamba H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Cost of tender form (Rs.)	Class	Completion period
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Repair of Distt. Ayurvedic Hospital at Chamba (SH:- Steel work, ceiling work, painting ,GI Sheet roofing and sanitary installation)	16,90,631/-	34,000/-	500/-	D & C	Two Months
2.	Construction of link road to village Baily from Rajera to Sanged road Km. 0/0 to 1/500 (SH:- Formation cutting work at Km. 0/00 to 1/200)	42,33,226/-	85,000/-	2000/-	D & C	Two Months

1. Starting Date for downloading 23/11/2024 at 10.00 AM
2. Deadline for submission of Bid 02/12/2024 at 11.00AM
3. Date of Technical bid opening 02/12/2024 at 11.30 AM

The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons there-of.

The Bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer,
Chamba Division, HPPWD Chamba, Pin-176310
Tel.01899-222229, Email:-ee-cha-hp@nic.in
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HP / 3383/24-25

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

Dy CME/Repair for Chief Workshop Manager N.E. Railway, Mechanical Workshop, Gorakhpur-for and on behalf of President of India invites tender through on line E-Single Tender for the following work-**E-Tender Notice No & Name of the work:** Tender No.- "26-GKP-MWS-2024-25-1" "Comprehensive AMC of CNC Axle Turning Lathe Model No. Spinner-25 (Make-ASKAR MICRON) for 03 years (36 months) of Wheel Shop at GKPS. Qty-01 No.", **Estimated cost (in ₹):** ₹ 92,74,800.00, **Earnest Money (in ₹):** ₹1,85,500.00, **Last date of tender submission:** Upto 11.00, Date: 16.12.2024, **Cost of the Tender forms :** Zero, **Period of Contract:** 36 Months, **Note:** The details of above tenders are also available on Indian Railway website **http://www. ireps.gov.in."**

Dy. CME/Repair, Mechanical Workshop Gorakhpur
CPRO/Mech-83

"DO NOT TRAVEL WITH INFLAMMABLE ARTICLE IN TRAIN"

TCED-RDSS-3352/22 & RDSH-7795/22 Dated: 21.11.2024

THRISSUR CORPORATION ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT

e-TENDER NOTICE

TCED-RDSS-3352/22 - HT UG Cabling (Last Date 16.12.24)
RDSS-7795/22 - Post Transformers, Substation & LA Numbering (Last Date: 12.12.24)

www.tced.in
log on to
www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

(Sd/-)
Assistant Secretary

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय मध्यप्रदेश भोपाल

क्रमांक- विशा/स्टोर/2024-25 (544), दिनांक- 19/11/2024

निविदा सूचना का शुध्दि पत्र (CORRIGENDUM)

विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय की निविदा सूचना क्रमांक SB/Store/2024- 25 (499), Bhopal, Dated 22-10-2024 द्वारा Fiber Optical Surveillance System & 3 Other Items के क्रय हेतु ई-निविदा सूचना जारी की गई है। उपरोक्त आमंत्रित निविदा के माध्यम से कय किये जाने वाले उपकरण के समय-सारणी में "आंशिक संशोधन" के संबंध में "शुद्धि पत्र" (Corrigendum/Addendum) जारी किया गया है जो website https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app पर तथा विभाग की वेबसाईट www.mppolice.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।

सहायक पुलिसे महानिरीक्षक, विशेष शाखा (सा), म.प्र. भोपाल
दूरभाष क्रं-0755-2443654
Email: sec25-sb@mppolice.gov.in

G19228/24

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tendering Tender Notice

Open E-tender on single bid system through E-Tender Notice No **M/DSL/IZN/TC/OT/86** are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS), Loco Shed, N. E. Railway, Izatnagar for and on behalf of President of India for the following work.

Name of work: Mentenance & Repair of roof mounted CAB AC units for minor & major scheduled of WAP-4, WAP-7 and WAG-9 electrict locomotives of Loco Shed, Izzatnagar for the period of 02 years. Estimated Value of Work (Rs.) ₹ 14,08,584.51 (Incl. all taxes), Earnest Money/ Bid Security (Rs.):₹ 28,200/- Cost of Tender Document-Rs. 0.00 Period of work - 02 Years. Date and time for closing of E-tender: 12.12.2024 at 15:00 Hrs.

Tenderer may submits their E-tenders online up to 15:00 hrs on 12.12.2024. Please go to the Indian railway website **www.ireps.gov.in** to see the complete details and upload/submit the E-tender.

Sr.Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS) Loco Shed, Izatnagar
CPRO/Elect-176

Never travel on roof and foot boards.

Office of
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ,6TH CIRCLE
H.P. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,
KULLU-175101
FAX: 01902-222530,E.mail.hp-kul@nic.in

"CORRIGENDUM"

e-Procurement tender invited vide this office letter No.PW/SEVI/G-I/Nabard/2024-2025-6677-6776 dated 12.11.2024 for the work C/O link road from Naggar to Krishna Mandir via Thawa upto Chachogi Km. 0/0 to 3/600 under NABARD RIDF-XXX (SH:- ROFD M/T R/wall, B/wall, CD Works, V-shape drain, Parapets, W-metal beam, Crash Barrier etc.) vide **Tender ID:- 2024_PWD_95385_1.** The BOQ uploaded on website:- www.hptenders.gov.in had some technical issue. Therefore now corrected BOQ is uploaded on www.hptenders.gov.in on 20.11.2024. The bidders are requested submit their respective bids online HP tender for the above work from 20.11.2024 at 5:00 PM.

Superintending Engineer,
6th Circle HP.PWD,Kullu.

No.PW/SEVI/G-I/Corrigendum/2024-2025-7156-80 Dated:-20.11.2024

HP / 3389/24-25

Public Health Engineering Department

Govt. of Bihar

(Bihar State Water and Sanitation Mission)
Advertisement Number:PH/BSWM-HR-RFQ-105/24

Request for Proposal

(Only though e- tendering mode on www.eproc.bihar.gov.in)

1	Designation and Address of Advertiser	Engineer in Chief -Cum- Spl. Secretary cum Member Secretary, Executive Committee, Bihar State Water and Sanitation Mission, Vishwesaraiya Bhawan, Nehru Path (Bailey Road), Patna- 800 015.
2	Date of issue of Tender Notice	**21-11-2024**
3	Period of Sale (downloading) of Tender Bid Document	From **02-12-2024** to **16-12-2024 www.eproc.bihar.gov.in**
4	Date and time & Place of Pre-bid Meeting	**09-12-2024** at **15.30** Hrs. in the office of the Engineer in Chief -Cum- Spl. Secretary, PHED, Vishwesaraiya Bhawan, Nehru Path (Bailey Road), Patna- 800 015.
5	Last date and time of receipt (uploading) of tender	**16-12-2024** to **15.30** Hrs. on **www.eproc.bihar.gov.in**
6	Date and time of opening of Technical Bid	**16-12-2024** up to **17.00** Hrs. on www.eproc.bihar.gov.in
7	Date and time of opening of Financial Bid	To be informed later after the approval of the Technical Bid.

8. Name of Work:-

S#	Name of work	Est. Cost (in lakh)	EMD (in lakh)	Cost of Tender Document (Non-	Tender Processing fee (non refundable) (In Rs.)	Contract period
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Request for Proposalto empanel experienced manpower placement agencies to provide Super Skilled/ Skilled, Semi-skilled and Unskilled manpower as per predefined qualification criteria on the basis of service charges.	968.17	19.50	10,000.00 (Through DD only)	As per self generated	12 months (+12 months extendable)

Any company/agency/firm/legally registered body of international or national repute or any PSU matching following eligibility criteria may give the tender but registration with the Public Health Engineering Department, Govt. of Bihar will be essential after issue of LOA: -

S#	DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED WITH TECHNICL BID
i	The organization must be registered under any Indian Law (Joint venture not allowed)	Attach copy of Registration Certificate or Copy of Agreement.
ii	Must have registered office in Patna	Attach copy of Registration Certificate or Copy of Agreement.
iii	Must have ESI and EPF registration	Attach copy of ESI and EPF registration certificate
iv	Must have GST Registration Number	Attach copy of GST Registration
v	The agency must not be blacklisted by any department or government offices	Affidavit to Notary Public
vi	Minimum turnover must be more than Rs. 200 Lakh at least in one year of last three years. FY 2021-22: FY 2022-23: FY 2023-24:	Balance sheet of last three financial year with UDI Number
vii	Must have experience of providing Super Skilled/Skilled, Semi-skilled and Unskilled manpower to Government Department/ Government owned organizations (minimum 3 work order). Preference would be given to Agency who have supplied technical manpower (more than 10) for laboratories of Govt./ PSUs	Attach copy of work order

For further details tenderers may contact the undersigned on any working day or see the PHED Web portal https://state.bihar.gov.in/phed/CitizenHome.html.

For further details please visit : **www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar**

Engineer-in-Chief cum Special Secretary
Member Secretary, Executive Committee
Bihar State Water and Sanitation Mission

PR- 012960 (PHED) 2024-25

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
KEONJHAR (R&B) CIRCLE, KEONJHAR

No. 5418 /Date. 18.11.2024

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

2nd Corrigendum to Bid Identification No CCEKC-22/2024-25

The following changes are made to the works invited vide Bid Identification No CCEKC - 22/2024-25 vide Letter No.4842 dt. 21.10.2024.

1. The bid documents in the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** will be available in the web site from **11.00 Hours of 28.11.2024 to 16.00 Hours of 12.12.2024** for online bidding.
2. Bids shall be received only on "online" on or before **16.00 Hours of 12.12.2024.**
3. Bids received **"on-line"** shall be **opened at 11.30 Hours on 13.12.2024** in the office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar.
4. If the office happens to be closed on the stipulated date of opening of Bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

All other terms & conditions remained unchanged.

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer,
Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar

B-654 OIPR-34033/11/0058/2425

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING, UTTAR PRADESH

6th FLOOR, JAWAHAR BHAWAN, LUCKNOW

No. : ME-3/2024/2646 **Lucknow : Dated 21 November, 2024**

TIME SCHEDULE FOR THE SPECIAL STRAY VACANCY ROUND OF ONLINE COUNSELING FOR UP NEET UG-2024

The time schedule for the Special Stray Vacancy round of online counseling for admission to undergraduate courses (MBBS/BDS) of government/private medical/dental colleges/ institutions/medical universities of the state under UP NEET UG-2024 is as follows :-

S.N.	Description	Dates	Total Days
1	Date of online registration & upload of documents	22nd November 2024 (From 11:00 AM) to 25th November 2024 (Till 11:00 AM)	03 Days
2	Date of deposition of registration & security money	22nd November 2024 (From 11:00 AM) to 25th November 2024 (Till 2:00 PM)	04 Days
3	Date of merit list declaration	25th November 2024	01 Day
4	Date of online choice filling	26th November 2024 (From 11:00 AM) to 28th November 2024 (Till 5:00 PM)	03 Days
5	Date of allotment result declaration	29th November 2024	01 Day
6	Date of downloading the allotment letters & Admission	30th November 2024, and 02nd December to 05th December 2024	05 Days

- Candidates who have registered in the Stray Vacancy Round are not required to register again in the Special Stray Vacancy Round.
- Such candidates who had registered in the Stray Vacancy Round but due to some reasons could not deposit the registration fee and security money. They can participate in the Special Stray Round by depositing the registration fee and security amount within the stipulated date.
- Those candidates who have not been allotted any seat in the first round, second round, third round and stray vacancy round can participate in the special stray vacancy round.
- Apart from the above, all eligible candidates can register by depositing online registration fee of Rs.1000/- (Rs. one thousand only).
- Only those candidates who have not been allotted any seat in any cycle of UP NEET UG 2024 are eligible for the Special Stray Vacancy Round.
- Candidates appearing for the first, second, third cycle and Stray Vacancy Round of UP NEET UG 2024 are not eligible for the Special Stray Vacancy Round.
- Candidates should assess their eligibility themselves as per the instructions contained in the government order/brochure of UP NEET UG 2024.

Help Line Numbers : 8189011696, 8189011697, 8189011698, 8189011699, 8189011700 **DGME**

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Bid Identification No. CCEKC - 28/2024-25

e-mail : ccekeonjharpwdcircle@gmail.com / sekcpwd_keonjhar@yahoo.com

Letter No. 5436 dt. 18.11.2024

1. No. of the work	:-	**4 number Building Works and 1 number Compound Wall & Approach Road**
2. Estimated cost	:-	**Rs. 108.91 Lakhs to Rs. 386.12 Lakhs**
3. Class of Contractor	:-	**"B" Class & "A" Class**
4. Period of completion	:-	**4 (Four) Calendar Months to 9 (Nine) Calendar Months**
5. Date and Time of availability of Bid document in the portal	:-	**From 11.00 Hours of 29.11.2024 to 16.00 Hours of 13.12.2024**
6. Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal	:-	**16.00 Hours of 13.12.2024**
7. Date of opening of Bid from Portal	:-	**11.30 Hours on 16.12.2024**
8. Name and address of the officer inviting Bid	:-	**Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar-758001.**

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "http://tendersodisha.gov.in"

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar

B-652 OIPR-34033/11/0059/2425

A ND-NDE

‘Global consensus must to face challenges in using AI for governance’

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Global consensus is required in formulating regulations for using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in governance to face emerging challenges such as copyrights, data protection, and cyber vulnerability issues, and it is time to think of expanding the usage of AI to newer areas, said panellists at the *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 here on Thursday.

During a panel discussion on the topic ‘AI Driven Governance-Concept to Practical Application’, moderated by Ramya Kannan, Chief of Bureau, Tamil Nadu, *The Hindu*, Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu, said the Health Department, in 2022, had introduced AI in diagnosing tuberculosis in six districts in the State.

“We have 45 mobile vans fitted with digital X-ray machines to go around in remote and inaccessible areas. Out of these, six vans have been fitted with an AI tool, and more than 56,000 people have been screened by this tool in the last two years. The rate of detection, in comparison to the traditional models, is twice, and it is as precise as it would be done manually.”

Call for regulation: Thamaraiselvan S., AVP, Infosec Governance; Hasti Trivedi, President, Chief Digital and AI Officer, Firstsource; B. Ravindran, head, Department of Data Science and AI, IIT-M; and Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, at a session moderated by Ramya Kannan (left), Chief of Bureau, Tamil Nadu, *The Hindu*, in Chennai on Thursday. AKHILA EASWARAN

Expanding use

Ms. Sahu said it is time to think of expanding the use of AI to newer areas.

“We were wondering what we can do to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks in Coimbatore district, where the railway tracks pass through the forest and divide two reserve forest patches. Elephants migrate from one patch to another to drink water and forage. There were accidents resulting in the death of elephants. But AI came to our rescue,” she said.

She said in the health sector, AI had the potential to play an important role in screening refractive eye errors among children and detecting pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH).

Stressing the need to build adequate digital infrastructure before AI can have an impact, B. Ravindran, head, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, Indian Institute of Technology-Madras, urged governments to actively work towards this.

“AI is not a single technology, but a slew of different things. We don’t need AI to solve all problems. We have to figure out what is the right solution that we need, especially in governance... What we see in most of the places where AI has made an impact, the actual AI solution itself is about 20 to 30% of the system,” he said.

A note of caution

He also sounded a note of caution that pushing the current state of AI models into governance would institutionalise models and is likely to ignore our cultural map. “We can talk about building AI models for the Indian condition. But we need to put in a lot of effort trying to build these safeguards for India. There is so much that is unique, like language, cuisine, literature to every State and region in this country that we need to capture.” He also said the Union government is planning to set up an AI safety institute soon.

Hasit Trivedi, president, Chief Digital and AI Officer, Firstsource, said India has taken the lead in getting a global consensus on AI in governance. “The bias, fairness, and risks have always been there since the birth of AI. But new things which came because of generative AI are copyright issues, data protection issues, and cyber vulnerability, and they require global consensus... From the Indian context, we have to be very careful because we should not be exporting the data. Data protection, usage, and localisation are extremely critical. I think we should ensure that we as a country do not become digital slaves.”

He also said, only the United States of America, China, and India have the potential to create AI technologies. “The U.S. has already created AI. China is in the race. India is the potential third country which can make a meaningful contribution to global AI.”

S. Thamaraiselvan, Assistant Vice-President, Infosec Governance, Hexaware, said: “The accuracy of the output that AI provides depends on the amount of data fed. In this context, we are already witnessing the digitisation in government sectors that is yielding results in terms of the efficiencies in consuming various services... Indians are the largest consumers of generative AI today. But we should explore how India can become a generator of AI technologies rather than consuming it. Even if we are consuming the data, we should explore to localise it to the Indian context.”

Fund focus: Sharad Agarwal, CEO, Sify Infinit Spaces Ltd., in conversation with Kunal Shankar, Deputy Business Editor, *The Hindu*. R. RAGU

‘Big investments being committed on data centres’

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In the last four to five years, the term ‘data centre’ has come to the forefront primarily because of the high demand for this infrastructure setup, especially after COVID-19, when the adoption of cloud increased, Sharad Agarwal, CEO, Sify Infinit Spaces Ltd., said at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 on Thursday.

Huge investments are being committed on data centres, he said during a fireside chat on ‘Data Centres in the age if AI: Enabling Scalability, Security and Sustainability’ with Kunal Shankar, Deputy Business Editor, *The Hindu*. Mr. Agarwal highlighted how new generation data centres were launched by Sify in Chennai, Bengaluru, and Mumbai.

Environmental footprint

Responding to a query on water consumption in the industry, he said: “One thing that the data centre industry is doing, and we are also doing at Sify, is that net footprint on the environment has to be minimal, and we have to do it in a sustainable manner. That means water is not a mandatory ingredient for the data centres, especially the clean water is not something that is must for the expansion of a data centre.”

Mr. Agarwal said “there is enough technology and enough development happening where we don’t have to rely on clean water.”

‘T.N. govt. to set up centre of excellence with AI lab’

Its services will be offered to start-ups and other small players for a low operation fee, says Kumar Jayant, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Information Technology and Digital Services

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government will set up a Centre of Excellence with an Artificial Intelligence (AI) lab and will offer this to start-ups and other small players with a minimal operation fee, said Kumar Jayant, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Information Technology and Digital Services, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Delivering his keynote address after inaugurating *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024, Mr. Jayant highlighted that the State recently announced its AI mission, and said that he would speak to the ICT Academy and explore how AI could be built into academics. ICT Academy is a not-for-profit, Government of India initiative that aims at training higher education teachers and students.

Speaking about the impact of AI on specific sectors, Mr. Jayant said: “One sector that has totally transformed is how we consume information. If you search for anything on Google, it gives an AI overview.” He, however, added: “One of the biggest issues is bias, such as algorithm-based bias and basic cognitive bias.”

Leveraging technology: Kumar Jayant speaking at the inaugural of the *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 in Chennai. AKHILA EASWARAN

Santhosh T.G., secretary of the CIO Association, said that though AI had been around for several decades, it has now emerged in a new avatar. We need to understand its capabilities and explore its full potential, he said.

Challenges ahead

Suresh Raman, convenor, CII TN ICT Panel and vice president and regional head, Tata Consultancy Services, said Tamil Nadu has always been ahead of the curve and has come out with policies pertaining to AI. Pointing out the challenges ahead, he said: “The real challenges lie in end-to-end infrastructure for IT for AI to freely scale. When I say infrastructure, I’m talking about infrastructure for AI training itself, and it is not as easy as it appears. The cost of AI hardware is going to be so high. Eventually, the hardware cost will come down.”

L.V. Navaneeth, CEO of The Hindu Group, said that AI is no longer a thing of the distant future; it is here and is shaping the way we live, work, and innovate. “While some important voices have argued that the impact of AI on humanity is likely to be as fundamental as fire, others have cautioned that, without the right guardrails, it could turn out to be an uncontrollable, raging wildfire,” he added.

A robot warmly greeted the guests upon arrival, offering a unique and innovative welcome experience at the event.

The event is presented by the SRM Institute of Science and Technology and powered by Sify, in association with ManageEngine.

The Confederation of Indian Industry is the industry partner, and CIO Association is the strategic partner.

RetailGPT is the phygital commerce partner for the summit; Tamil Nadu Health Systems Project is the healthcare partner, and LatentView Analytics is the data analytics partner. Tamil Nadu Technology Hub has been roped in as the digital transformation partner while Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation has come in as the skilling partner.

Chennai Metro Rail Limited is the mobility partner, and the TV partner is *Puthiya Thalaimurai*.

Collaboration push: Vanitha Venugopal, CEO, iTNT, in conversation with John Xavier, Technology Editor, *The Hindu*. R. RAGU

We plan to work with other States on best practices: iTNT CEO

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

> At present, we have around 24 start-ups incubated in Tamil Nadu Technology Hub
>
> **VANITHA VENUGOPAL**
> CEO, Tamil Nadu Technology Hub

“We have already signed a memorandum of understanding with T-Hub, Hyderabad, to work on best practices,” Vanitha Venugopal, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Tamil Nadu Technology Hub (iTNT), said here on Thursday.

Participating in ‘Fireside Chat: AI-Driven Innovation: Shaping The Future of Technology and Industry in Tamil Nadu’, she said: “Collaborating with neighbouring States is absolutely something we are looking at. AI can do what you feed and preach, but the ethical aspect is something we have to imbibe. It is a cultural change. AI is going to take over a lot of things that we are going to do. iTNT can only encourage and support start-ups that work with us to work ethically. We cannot mandate what they should do.”

In a conversation with John Xavier, Technology Editor, *The Hindu*, Ms. Venugopal said: “At present, we have around 24 start-ups incubated in iTNT. As iTNT, we are trying to help start-ups make inroads into government datasets. In our many programmes, we are encouraging researchers to come and take their idea, convert it into a start-up, and commercialise it. We have also joined hands with the Tamil Nadu Start-up and Innovation Mission, which has nine regional hubs, to have an iTNT desk at each location to harness talent.”

‘Students must learn to adapt to new technology for industrial adaptability’

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Students must learn to adapt to new technology and equip themselves with artificial intelligence (AI) skills for industrial adaptability, Revathi Venkataraman, chairperson, School of Computing, SRMIST, said here on Thursday.

In a fireside chat on ‘Empowering Students in the Age of AI: Skills for Tomorrow’s Innovators’ with Srinivasan Ramani, Deputy National Editor, *The Hindu*, as part of *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024, she said while the core engineering subjects were leveraging AI tools now, it was essential for engineering professionals to focus on fundamental engineering skills, such as creative thinking and problem solving. She stressed that AI skills could be a complementary tool and not a replacement.

Stress on skilling: Revathi Venkataraman, chairperson, School of Computing, SRMIST, in conversation with Srinivasan Ramani, Deputy National Editor, *The Hindu*. AKHILA EASWARAN

To a question posed by Mr. Ramani on whether AI has been incorporated in the curriculum of other disciplines, she said Gen AI and design thinking had been included in the course curriculum of all the disciplines in SRM Institutions. Students also gain hands-on experience through various multi-disciplinary projects.

Ethics and AI

Speaking about AI ethics training for students, Ms. Venkataraman said it had been interwoven into their curriculum, and that students were often questioned about the ethical interpretations of their projects. They were also guided towards contributing to sustainable development goals. Gen AI tools were now used by both students and teachers, she added.

Earlier, Mr. Ramani observed that AI had evolved beyond technology and had democratised knowledge to a wider range of people through the use of various applications.

‘Human intervention and ethical considerations are essential to AI’

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

While artificial intelligence (AI) has made significant strides in transforming industries and improving efficiency, there are areas where human intervention remains essential – this was the perspective shared by panellists at the session ‘Transition from Hope to Reality: Navigating AI Challenges’ during *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024.

“No one expected that GenAI would creep into all fields. Today, it has taken centre stage in the education sector and cine industry,” Manjunath Prasad, Head, IT Operations, TVS Mobility, said. “There is a general conception that GenAI can do everything – it cannot do everything. Giving the right input and the right data matters,” he added. Mr. Prasad pointed out that human skill is needed to review whether we are on the right track.

Addressing challenges: Manjunath Prasad, Head, IT Operations, TVS Mobility, Roopesh Kumar, Head, Data Centre Projects, Sify Infinit Spaces Ltd, Srinivasan A.N., VP-Information Technology, SRF Limited, and Annie Uthra, Head, Department of Computational Intelligence at SRMIST, at the session moderated by Suresh Vijayaraghavan, CTO, The Hindu Group. AKHILA EASWARAN

The panel, moderated by Suresh Vijayaraghavan, Chief Technology Officer (CTO), The Hindu Group, also spoke about specialists required to handle operations and manage AI. “GenAI is not just a simple programme. You need to consider the data, the security, and what gateway you are going to use,” said Srinivasan A.N., VP-Information Technology, SRF Limited.

“You need a domain specialist, a data scientist to manage the data, a software guy to integrate AI with the system,” he added.

Roopesh Kumar, Head, Data Centre Projects, Sify Infinit Spaces Ltd, pointed out how digitisation is often confused with AI. “The resource required for digitisation is far lower than AI,” he said.

Annie Uthra, Head, Department of Computational Intelligence at SRMIST, said GenAI was growing fast. “To cope with those changes, we have been upskilling students and faculty,” she said.

'AI will drive innovation, revolutionise business and make life better'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will drive innovation and bring innovative thinking to life more effectively and efficiently, and in the realm of business, it is going to revolutionise and deliver 100% results, said panellists at the *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 here on Thursday.

At a panel discussion on 'Driving Innovation: AI's Role in Transforming Business Operation', moderated by L.V. Navaneeth, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), The Hindu Group, Hariharan Veeramuthu, Chief Information Officer, Gulf Asia Engineering Projects, spoke about how businesses can integrate AI to enhance operational efficiency and drive innovation across functions.

"There are three pillars: people, process, and technology. Now there are many IT tools and systems that are being implemented by different industries and companies. We need to look at the core areas where we have bottlenecks in the process, where we need to fine-tune our existing systems, and the need to migrate from the legacy to the digital journey," he added.

For sustainability goals

Speaking about how AI can contribute to achieving sustainability goals in business operations, such as reducing waste and optimising energy usage, he said products have come up with AI as the base. "We need to have particular metrics to optimise our solutions. Those can be applied to day-to-day activities and improvise the process by using technology to leverage their efficiency in operations," he added. Nitin Maheshwari, Director, Information Technology, Flex, while speaking about how AI is enabling companies to rethink traditional business models for greater confidence, said when legacy companies want to become digital first, they should not just attempt to replace certain technologies with the latest ones. There are certain questions that need to be asked on why the company wants to become digital first and how much investment is required.

Tech talk: (From left) L.V. Navaneeth moderates a panel discussion on 'Driving Innovation: AI's Role in Transforming Business Operation' with Sadique Ahmed, Nitin Maheshwari, Hariharan Veeramuthu, and Raghu Achat, during *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 on Thursday. R. RAGU

All these should be implemented iteratively.

Impact on jobs

On the likely impact of AI on jobs and the future of employability in the workplace, he said from an employee perspective, we need to get back to reality and embrace AI, and from the organisation perspective, AI is not only a driver to save cost, it can also help in terms of making employees more efficient. "Going forward, AI will do whatever it does best, right from processing and playing with massive amounts of data to solving complex problems. Human intelligence and artificial intelligence will coexist, and they will complement each other," he added.

Sadique Ahmed, founder and CEO, Pathfinder Global, while speaking about the key performance indicators that organisations should use to measure the success of AI initiatives, said optimisation of business, financial metrics, customer engagement and satisfaction, sustainability, and increasing productivity of the people are some of the key metrics. "How are these tools going to enable our leadership and our teams on the ground to deliver more? Instead of having an army of people, how can we get better outcomes from the same people is an important metric," he said.

He said AI is going to make life better. "We need to embrace the new revolution," he said. He highlighted the higher cost of customer services at the level of hyper-personalisation, and said: "With AI, it is just a fraction of the cost on scale to look at it... People were scared it was going to take jobs. But actually, it gave more jobs. AI is going to increase opportunities."

Raghu Achat, Vice-President, Information Technology, Thejo Engineering, while speaking about implementing AI in legacy systems and traditional business practices, observed that there is nothing called 'legacy systems' any more. "Because today, systems are capable of crunching structured and unstructured data," he said. He stressed on the need to break the legacy mindset to adopt technologies, and said that motivation should be the prime driver behind digital transformation in an organisation.

AI versus AI: Sujatha Iyer, head of AI Security, ManageEngine, at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024. R. RAGU

'To fight AI's dark side, use artificial intelligence'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Like the saying goes, "Set a thief to catch a thief," one can use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to combat AI, Sujatha Iyer, Head of AI Security ManageEngine said at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024.

"ChatGPT and Large Language Model (LLM) are increasing productivity levels. But there is a dark side to LLMs too. There are similar platforms which are used to generate convincing phishing campaigns. You wont even have a suspicion that it is a phishing campaign," she said during a fireside chat with Suresh Vijayaraghavan Chief Technology Officer of *The Hindu* Group on the topic 'AI in Cybersecurity: Building Next-Generation Defences Against Emerging Threats.'

Ms. Iyer further said, "If you look at the scenario today, digital has become the first touch point of every business. There is a lot of emphasis and momentum on security and privacy."

She pointed out that given the digitisation speed.. not every employee is going to be digitally aware.. so there are chances of phishing campaigns and people inadvertently enter their credentials online. In such cases AI will help you take a stand – they see suspicious sites and alert you, she added. AI helps take the next big action, she said adding that it is important to monitor your sample set to see if there is any drift in data.

AI is augmentative tech, not a replacement for human capital: Minister

Palanivel Thiaga Rajan says AI is a wonderful opportunity and not a threat; Tamil Nadu's IT Minister adds the ultimate benefit of AI would be in addressing real problems of governance

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, Tamil Nadu's Minister for Information Technology and Digital Services, said on Thursday that artificial intelligence (AI) is "augmentative technology rather than a replacement for human capital."

In his valedictory address at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024, he said: "This is a vital period in our evolution as a country where, now and for the next 20 years, India will be the largest source of working-age human capital in the world. This is our chance to take AI as a wonderful opportunity rather than to see it as a threat."

The Minister said that the volume of data collected, stored and available for analysis is "mind-boggling".

"The first PC I had in my house in Madurai in 1981, had a RAM of 64 kilobytes and a hard drive of 20 megabytes. Today, we have run out of zeros to talk about the amount of data being generated every day."

Showcasing opportunity: Palanivel Thiaga Rajan speaking at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 in Chennai on Thursday. R. RAGU

Mr. Thiaga Rajan said that earlier, data was manually entered into a computer. "Now, we have data that nobody has ever touched, coming in at such high volumes. This lends itself to the notion that we don't need a human being in between. The collection and storage is automatic. The algorithms will process the data, and the results will come without any human being having touched it. So, data is the first big thing that has changed."

He said that we had moved past traditional notions of data and have taken a more inclusive approach, especially in the case of voice data, which according to him would be a gamechanger in India. "If you have a huge volume of data and a large amount of processing capability, the physical infrastructure becomes the bottleneck. The first question is do we have data centres that can store that kind of data."

He added the shift towards automation and processing was inevitable. "But at this point, technology still is augmentative. We can see so many flaws, and limitations in technology. It will take time for us to clean all this data and use it effectively."

He said the ultimate benefit of AI would be to address problems in governance. Across the world, all governments had under-invested in infrastructure, processing capability, and cybersecurity. He said job replacements would happen, but not immediately. "We have time and all of us collectively – the government, industry, academia, global companies, and innovators – will find a way to see this as an inflection point, not just in technology, but in our economic activity," he added.

Quality check: Saravanakumar Krishnamurthy, Rajan Sethuraman, Rajiv R.G., and Santhosh T.G. at the summit. R. RAGU

'AI can be an effective tool if availability of clean data is ensured'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Data is like oxygen and for artificial intelligence (AI) to be useful, one needs "oxygenated data", the "clean data" that is available with a company, said Santhosh T.G., Chief Digital Officer, Switch Mobility, at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 on Thursday.

During a panel discussion on 'AI in Decision-Making: Enhancing Data-Driven Strategies', he said, "Data plays a major role. When a manufacturing company can have a battalion of people to check vehicle quality, I think it is the right time that every organisation also had a couple of people to check that the quality of data coming is also correct."

Stating that AI is still a co-pilot, Rajiv R.G., Chief Information Officer, Bawan Cybertek, said the question whether "AI can make a decision with an empathetic view" remains to be answered.

"I came across a person in an interior village who runs a door-to-door beauty parlour set up [after] seeking a loan in the microfinance industry. She was denied the loan by AI because her credit exposure is high, but a salesperson said that she was a good customer and has scope to expand and that she would also be able to repay the loan. The empathy angle is missed," he said.

In the discussion, moderated by Nagaraj N., Vice-President, Content Analytics & Data, The Hindu Group, Saravankumar Krishnamurthy, Chief Information Security Officer, Vivriti Capital, said, AI will not replace human touch.

Rajan Sethuraman, Chief Executive Officer, Latent View, said he "wouldn't worry too much about the quality of the data as a major stumbling block".

AI models must be transparent for better traceability, say experts

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Artificial intelligence (AI) models must be transparent for better traceability and enable users to interpret the decisions made, said panelists at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 here on Thursday.

Experts from various sectors spoke on the 'Ethical Considerations in AI: Navigating the Moral Landscape' in a session moderated by John Xavier, Editor-Technology, *The Hindu*.

Highlighting how AI is used to maintain electronic medical records and assist in solutions to build diabetic retinopathy, Srinivasulu Thayam, Chief Technology Officer, Aravind Eye Care System, said there were challenges in addressing synthetic data. Besides validating the data used for decision support system, clinical stakeholders are explained about the outcomes.

(From left) John Xavier with Srinivasulu Thayam, T.K. Balaji, V. Kavitha, and Balakrishnan Kanniah, at the summit . R. RAGU

While Balaji T.K., Assistant Vice-President, Engineering, FlexiLoans, noted that AI algorithms are used for credit scores for loans and its assistance is sought with data patterns for credit assessment, Balakrishna Kanniah, Chief Information Officer, VA Tech Wabag, noted that AI gave an insight into data analytics to develop a decision support system on water storage. It helped in preparing a gist of large tender documents and ensure quick decisions.

Kavitha V., Head, Department of Data Science and Business Systems, School of Computing, SRMIST, said that AI is a non-linear model and vigorous testing process would help arrive at a reliable model. Students are taught to come up with products and AI solutions where outcomes can be interpreted.

The panelists suggested that an alternative mechanism must be in place to audit AI system and ensure fundamental ethical policy for AI.

Gen X sees future in AI, language barriers may go: Innocent Divya

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The younger generation has immense potential to transform technology into a valuable tool for themselves and the industry they work in, said Innocent Divya, Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC), at *The Hindu* AI Summit 2024 here on Thursday. She said academicians, too, are embracing artificial intelligence (AI), besides students who see their future in AI.

In a fireside chat on 'Empowering Future Talent: Leveraging AI for Student Upskilling' with Nagaraj N., Vice-President, Content Analytics and Data, The Hindu Group, Ms. Divya spoke about the *Naan Mudhalvan Scheme*, Tamil Nadu's flagship skill development programme, and the key challenges faced by TNSDC in implementing it.

Nagaraj N. in conversation with Innocent Divya on 'Leveraging AI for Student Upskilling in Tamil Nadu'. AKHILA EASWARAN

The scheme focused on bridging the skill gap in curricula, providing industry-relevant training, and offering emerging technology skills to students. Noting that digital divide and the availability of qualified trainers were the key challenges, Ms. Divya said TNSDC collaborated with academic institutions and industries to bridge these gaps. Some of the emerging technologies, like electric vehicles technology, did not have standardised textbooks, she said.

To a question posed by Mr. Nagaraj on the challenge of communication skills, Ms. Divya said while it is a concern flagged by the industry despite the technical capabilities of students, language barrier may become a thing of the past with AI tools being customised in regional languages. The TNSDC has prioritised the combination of communication skills and soft skills as a two-credit programme in curriculum to enhance the employability of students.

Tigers at the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, where a man was killed in a tiger attack in November. SABIKA SYED

In Ranthambore, tigers and humans struggle for space and survival

In Rajasthan's overcrowded reserve, where restrictive territories cost humans and tigers their lives, a man was killed in a tiger attack and the tiger killed by angry villagers. **Alisha Dutta** travels to villages on the edge of the forest, where residents say the way tigers behave has changed over the years and that their losses are both emotional and financial

On the morning of November 2, on a hillock adjacent to Uliyana village, the rhythmic bleating of goats suddenly went silent. Over the next few hours, the village, situated in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district, witnessed the discovery of a corpse, flying axes and improvised low-intensity devices, a protest, and later in the night, the carcass of a 12-year-old tiger.

Bordering the over 1,500-square-kilometre Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, the village has often seen Royal Bengal Tigers descend from forested hillocks to the low-lying agricultural fields in search of easy prey like cattle. However, on that Saturday, the tiger was allegedly found sitting next to the mauled body of a villager, Bharat Lal Meena, 50. The tiger had one paw on the corpse, say villagers. Later, he was identified as Chirico, or T-86, the Forest Department's 'file name' used for tracking purposes.

According to government data, from 2019 to 2024, five human beings have lost their lives in tiger attacks, and over 2,000 cattle were killed by tigers in the same period. While the Forest Department records the number of tiger-related deaths, there is no record of them being killed.

A few days after the incident, there were reports in the media about the Forest Department recording that 25 of Ranthambore's 75 tigers were "missing". Officials clarified that 14 tigers had been missing for less than a year; 11 for over a year. An official says there could be many reasons for this: tigers not caught in the monitoring cameras, migration, death due to old age, and even poaching. Soon, 10 of the 14 were tracked. The National Tiger Conservation Authority, which conducts a tiger census every four years, has asked the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to look into the matter.

A village mourns

In Uliyana, a shroud of grief surrounds the newly constructed house of Bharat Lal's family. Prasathi Meena, his wife, is surrounded by women relatives in one corner of the house. "There was a lot of commotion; then someone said my husband had been attacked by a tiger. What happened after that is a blur now," says Prasathi in a hushed tone from beneath a *ghoonghat* (veil) that covers her face and neck.

Prasathi, who villagers say fainted seconds after receiving the news, recalls that her husband had stepped out to take his goats to graze in the buffer zone between the tiger reserve and their village. There are walls built around villages, but there are breaks, and many require repair.

"My husband would step out every day around 10.30 a.m. On that day too, he had his meal and left with the goats around noon," Prasathi says, her voice drowning amid the heavy, synchronised wails of women mourning around her. She never imagined that the tiger would take him. "Why did the tiger not take the goats and spare him?" she says.

Babu Lal, the sarpanch of Uliyana, who was at the forefront of the attempted rescue mission, recalls seeing the tiger sitting next to the body of Bharat Lal. "We weren't sure what his condition was, but the chance of him surviving a tiger attack was slim," he says.

> My husband would step out every day around 10.30 a.m. On that day too, he had his meal and left with the goats around noon. Why did the tiger not take the goats and spare him?
>
> **PRASATHI MEENA**
> Resident of Uliyana village

The low-lying buffer zone, which separates the agricultural land of the village from the lush green tiger terrain in the hills, soon saw the rise of a mob. Instinctively, villagers threw *tote* (countrymade bombs used to break stones), axes, stones, and every sharp object they had at the tiger, Babu recounts. "I had called the Forest Department and the police, but they did not come immediately and we had to try and save our brother," he says.

Chirico retreated into the forest and the villagers rushed to Bharat Lal, who had grievous injuries. Angry and frustrated at the lack of a proactive approach by government agencies, the villagers carried his body to Sawai Madhopur-Kundera Road, almost 5 km away.

"Over 1,000 people sat in protest on the road, blocking it for passers-by. The mob refused to hand over the body for post-mortem until the family was paid ₹15 lakh," a senior Forest Department official says.

Twenty-one hours later, State Agriculture Minister Kirodi Lal Meena met the angry villagers on the road that connects villages in the district. "The villagers handed over the body and cleared the road only after the Minister assured them of compensation," recalls the official.

Years of anger

This distrust towards the Forest Department officials is not new, says Dharmendra Khandal, a wildlife biologist with Tiger Watch, a non-profit organisation involved in wildlife conservation in Ranthambore. "Fateh Singh Rathore [who went on to become Ranthambhore's Field Director] was attacked by the villagers of Uliyana in the 1980s. The villagers had broken both his legs. His life was spared only because his driver managed to come between him and the angry mob," says Khandal.

Rathore, who founded Tiger Watch and is often called India's 'Tiger Guru', was one of the members of the first Project Tiger started in 1973 to conserve tigers in the country. "The villagers were angry that they were being displaced by Rathore to give better structure to the tiger reserve," Khandal says. The belief among villagers today is that the reserve is being maintained to attract international tourists at the cost of the lives of people who live in the forest, he says.

The day after Bharat Lal died, the Forest Department formed a search party to look for Chirico. "We could not enter the village as the residents were still agitated, and from what human intel we had received, the tiger was badly injured after he was attacked," says the official.

The department sent drones around the forest bordering Uliyana and spotted the tiger's carcass about 500 metres from the spot where the villagers had found Bharat Lal's body. "Chirico has often preyed on cattle in the nearby villages but not on any human. Contrary to what locals are saying, he was not a man-eater," he says.

The official adds that the tiger had old injuries on his front legs and chest from a fight for territory with another tiger in the forest. "The post-mortem report has shown that those wounds were healing. He died primarily due to traumatic injury on his face and back from sharp objects," he says.

> A grown goat can be sold for more than ₹10,000, but now fearing for our lives, most of us are selling them at ₹4,000-₹5,000
>
> **HANUMAN MEENA**
> Resident of Khava village

A retired Forest Department official says contrary to the perception of the villagers, a majority of Ranthambore's tigers are not man-eaters. "A man-eating tiger is one that has been compelled through stress of circumstances to resort to preying on humans," the official says. These circumstances are usually beyond the tiger's control. "Mostly wounded, old tigers resort to becoming man-eaters, but human beings are not their natural prey," he says.

Anoop K.R., Field Director, Ranthambore, says it is possible that T-86 had wanted to attack the cattle, but since the man was a barrier, the tiger attacked him instead.

Changing patterns

Despite villagers coexisting with tigers and other wildlife in the area, increased human-animal conflict has forced people to make changes in their ways of living and working.

In Khava village in the same district, Bhatti Lal says his brother was mauled and killed by a tiger last year when he took his goats out to graze not far from the boundary wall that separates the village from the forest. "He was sitting in the hilly area while the goats were grazing. The tiger attacked him from behind and dragged him into the forest," says Bhatti. Since then, the pastoralists in the area have started making loud sounds when they take cattle to graze, he adds.

Hanuman Meena, another resident of Khava village, says most villagers are selling their livestock at a loss. "A grown goat can be sold for more than ₹10,000, but now fearing for our lives, most of us are selling them at ₹4,000-₹5,000," says Hanuman. This has also deprived them of a livelihood from dairy products. Most villagers in the area depend on growing wheat, jowar, or bajra. A few are employed in the tourism industry.

News of Bharat Lal's death also reached the neighbouring villages like Padli. Here, in 2019, a woman was attacked by a tiger while defecating in the fields. While in Uliyana and Khava, tigers had attacked villagers on the periphery of the forest, in Padli, Munni Devi was killed about 6 km from the forest area, say villagers.

According to her neighbour, Rekha Devi, tigers often roam in the village's guava patches, but it was for the first time that it had attacked a human. "Then houses in the village did not have bathrooms, so women would use the fields, going early," explains Rekha, adding that the incident took place at 5 a.m. Since then, women go in groups to defecate or work in the fields.

Villagers also complain that despite many representations to the Forest Department to increase the height of the boundary walls and maintain them, nothing has been done. "At least 30% of our crops are destroyed by wild animals (nilgai, brown bears, leopards). The cost of this is not met by the Forest Department," says Ramesh Meena, a resident of Padli.

Ramesh adds that while the Forest Department is supposed to provide compensation of ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 for the loss of cattle, in most instances the hassle of travelling over 15 km to a government office many times, over a number of months, is more harrowing than bearing the loss. "Many villagers give up on the compensation," he says.

Villagers living in the buffer zone say the behaviour of tigers over the past decade has changed. Laad Devi, 70, from Khava village, says tigers and humans have long coexisted in this area. "Tigers would wander about the fields in the early morning. They did kill cattle, but never attacked humans in this region," she says.

Laad recalls one such day from her childhood when a tiger had made its way into her millet field. "It was a misty morning and when I spotted the tiger in the field, I just stood still. It passed by me and went towards the other end of the field," she says.

Villagers and the retired Forest Department official say Ranthambore is overcrowded with both tigers and humans. Tigers in the area have historically migrated to Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, but of late outmigration has been negligible, they say.

Prasathi Meena, whose husband Bharat Lal Meena was killed in a tiger attack, with her son at Uliyana village in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district; (right) pugmarks at Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, often used to track tiger movement. SABIKA SYED

Creating magic Blessy with AR Rahman; (below) Prithviraj Sukumaran as Najeeb in *The Goat Life*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

As *Aadujeevitham: The Goat Life* wins the prestigious Hollywood Music in Media Awards (HMMA), Blessy talks about his collaboration with AR Rahman and the symbolism that dots the tale of survival

An emotional connect

Anuj Kumar
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This has been a rewarding fortnight for Blessy. The musical score of the noted Indian filmmaker's survival drama *Aadujeevitham - The Goat Life* has won the prestigious Hollywood Music in Media Awards for its moving background score and is in contention for the Golden Peacock at the ongoing International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa, 2024.

Blessy, who is in Los Angeles to make a bid for the Academy Awards in the general category, says the film has received widespread appreciation globally and is connecting with people. Blessy who received the award on Rahman's behalf describes his collaboration with Rahman as "incredibly thrilling".

"I could feel that, like me, he was experiencing something almost divine while working on this film," he says.

Unfolding like a spiritual cousin of Ang Lee's *Life of Pi*, the film is an adaptation of Benyamin's best-selling Malayalam novel *Aadujeevitham*. It follows the travails and tenacity of Najeeb, a Malayali immigrant labourer who ends up herding goats in the Arabian desert. After years of struggle in deeply inhuman conditions, he finds a way to escape with the help of a mysterious Somalian goatherd, Khadiri.

Shot in punishing conditions, the film's theme of migration and survival evocatively expressed by Prithviraj Sukumaran has cut through geographical and linguistic barriers to become a symbol of the human spirit amidst adversity.

Excerpts from an interview:

Question: *What was your brief to Rahman for* The Goat Life*?*
Answer: The brief I gave him for the Arabic song was that the character, struggling to survive the relentless desert, has lost all hope. The song is their cry – a prayer to a higher power for salvation. It's intensely powerful. I truly believe Rahman has woven magic with both the songs and the background score.

Q: *How did you ensure that the visual spectacle doesn't overpower Najeeb's internal struggle?*
A: As a director, I've always believed in the power of raw human emotions on screen. In this film, Nature itself became a character – a silent yet powerful presence with its own emotional journey, one that I endeavoured to convey just as profoundly as the human story.

Each shot in the film was thoughtfully crafted to mirror the characters' emotions. During the escape, the frame rate was adjusted to reflect Najeeb's waning energy as he travelled. Top-angle shots were used sparingly. Wide shots were employed to capture the vastness, isolation, and haunting fear of the desert.

In literature, chapters can stand on their own, but cinema requires a continuous emotional flow. In the book, the story is conveyed through the protagonist's inner monologue, with his emotions expressed through words. In cinema, however, we needed to convey his emotions through actions to connect with the audience.

Q: *Why have you kept the references to the carnal desires of Najeeb out of the film?*
A: Najeeb's decision to escape the desert is deeply rooted in his unwavering love for his wife, Sainu. This love becomes his anchor, the force that keeps him going, even when every part of him wants to give up. It's not just his will to survive, but the thought of her that drives him forward through the unbearable trials of the desert. His emotional journey takes a different path from the book.

Q: *Tell us about the symbolism behind the empty bottle of Coke amid the desert?*
A: The Coke bottle is a symbol of hope, a detail not found in the original book. This simple object offers a small sense of comfort to the protagonist. Feeling defeated, he throws the bottle away but as it hits the sand, the wind sweeps through, creating a low, humming sound. Drawn to it, he picks the bottle back up and holds it close, reminded of Khadiri and what he values the most.

This bottle, small and seemingly unimportant, becomes his quiet companion, helping him find the strength to keep going.

Q: *The plight of Najeeb shines a light on the Kafala system in West Asia which human rights groups criticise for its exploitative nature.*
A: The story is set in the 1990s. The Kafala system is less common today. The book has reached readers across India and beyond, and I believe its impact has helped transform labour laws in West Asia.

STEPOUT

Celebrating crafts

World Crafts Forum will put together panel discussions on global crafts, networking opportunities with artisans, designers and policy makers and showcase domestic and overseas craftspersons and their skilful work. The event marks the 60th anniversary of World Crafts Council.
At the National Crafts Museum, Bharat Mandapam, Bhairon Marg, Pragati Maidan; November 22 to 24; 10am owards

Global feast

This two-day world food carnival will bring world cuisines under one roof. From street food to gourmet, indulge in rich flavours from Mexico, Italy, Japan, Korea, Thailand and more
At Worldmark, Aerocity; November 23 and 24; Noon onwards

Music fest

The 20th SaMAPa Sangeet Sammelan pays tribute to Pandit Bhajan Sopori. The three-day Indian classical music festival will feature vocal recitals by Sandip Bhattacharjee, Avinash Kumar, and Harish Tiwari. A special painting exhibition by artists from Jammu and Kashmir can also be seen at the venue.
At Kamani auditorium, Copernicus Marg; November 22 to 24; 6pm; Entry free

The essence of Connaught Place

An ongoing exhibition at Dhoomimal Gallery unravels the many stories that exist between the gigantic white columns of Connaught Place

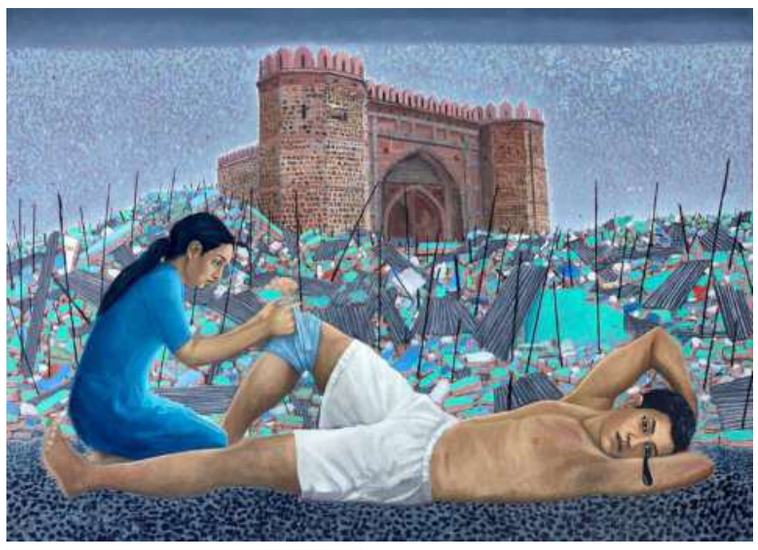
Shailaja Tripathi

"It's my love letter to Delhi," says Annapurna Garimella about the show The Past Has a Home in the Future," currently on at the Dhoomimal Gallery. Annapurna has curated the show for Jackfruit Research and Design, an organisation for the arts.

Through an array of archive imagery, artworks, and specially commissioned projects in textiles, ceramics, visual arts and sound, Annapurna peels off the layers to highlight Connaught Place as a microcosm of Delhi that it once was.

The architectural landmark was envisaged as a robust commercial structure in Delhi, the seat of the British Raj. Drawing from the architectural elements of the Royal Crescent in Bath, England, RT Russell rendered it with two rings of concentric circles, double-storey buildings and marble-white pillars. It was built over five years, from 1929 to 1933. This iconic complex – named after the Duke of Connaught, Prince Arthur – was frequented by British elite from across the country.

Several stores and shops emerged to serve this clientele – Jain Book Agency, Vaish Tailors, shops selling equestrian accessories, uniform suppliers, and many more, including Dhoomimal Gallery, which is hosting the show.



Group show Artworks on display at Dhoomimal Gallery. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

From the archives

The exhibition is divided into line, shape, movement, and community, with each section focussing on visual, spatial, and relational elements.

The show features archival works from various institutions, including Mahatta & Co., Pablo and Richard Bartholomew, Alkazi Foundation for the Arts, Riten Mozumdar, and SL Parasher, alongside contemporary designers. It also comprises newly commissioned works from artists Puneet Brar, Rema Kumar, Pooja Saxena, KP Reji and Guild Art, Anwar Chitrakar, Anandit Sachdev, Dhruv Vaish among others.

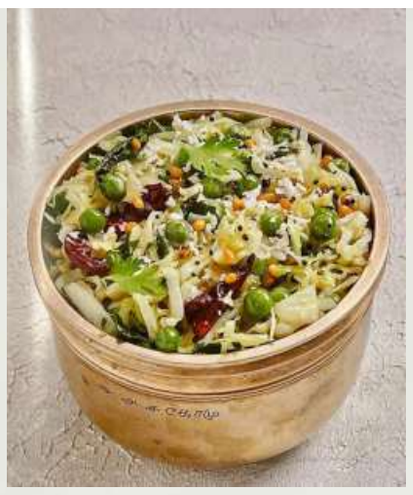
West-Midnapore-based Anwar Chitrakar spotlights the origins and essence of Connaught Place in his eight works rendered in Kalighat and pattachitra style. He visited Delhi and researched its history. "When Connaught Place was being built, a lot of people from different faiths donated their land. The spiritual gurus told the British to build anything, but without demolishing any religious structure. To me, Connaught Place's syncretism stood out."

Cityscape on cloth

Textile designer Rema Kumar pays tribute to Riten Mozumdar, a seminal artist-designer with an incredible body of work through her textiles – stoles and saris. "There is similarity between his design aesthetics and mine. He had so much geometry in his designs, and so did I. He has done some fabulous work for iconic stores in CP – The Shop, Fabindia, Cottage emporiums," explains Rema. Her textiles displayed next to Riten's works appear as if they are in a dialogue.

Design research practice Chaal Chaal Agency looks at the *tehbazaari* culture of CP or the hawkers who sell through makeshift shops. Architects and founders of Chaal Chaal Agency – Kruti Shah and Sebastian Trujillo – have been researching street vendors and corner shops that exist in this solid colonnade. "We have been probing the future of these shops. We have joined these panels without any nails, bolts or sticking material," they say in unison. There is also a soundscape of Connaught Place that explores the notion of time, chaos and melody, produced by the artist Anandit Sachdev.

At Dhoomimal Gallery, G-42, Connaught Circus; Till December 7; 11am to 7pm



From the kitchen (Clockwise from right) Late Prema Srinivasan; cabbage and peas poriyal; and sweet puttu and puttu kuzhal and chombu. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A pot full of tradition

Pure Vegetarian is a guide to South Indian vegetarian cuisine, blending recipes, anecdotes and culinary insights

Ananyaa Desikan
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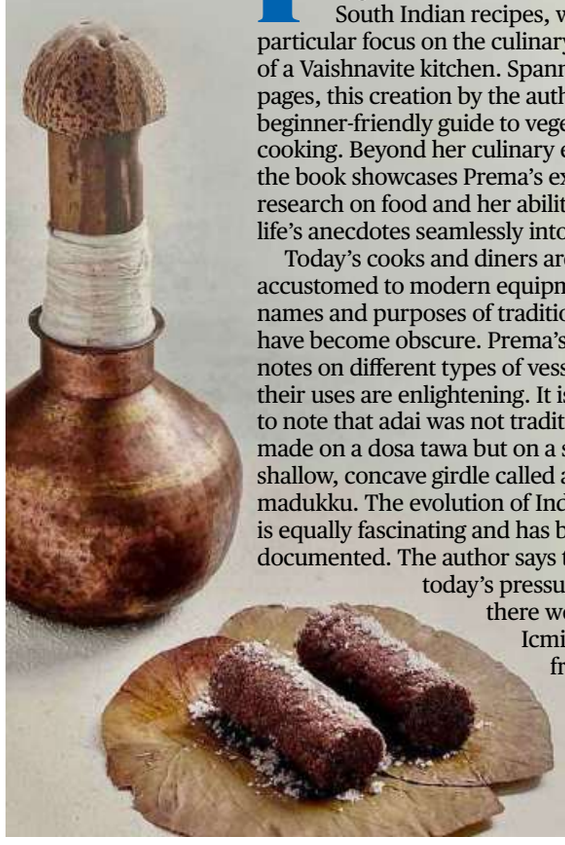
Prema Srinivasan's book *Pure Vegetarian* delves into traditional South Indian recipes, with a particular focus on the culinary practices of a Vaishnavite kitchen. Spanning 384 pages, this creation by the author is a beginner-friendly guide to vegetarian cooking. Beyond her culinary expertise, the book showcases Prema's extensive research on food and her ability to weave life's anecdotes seamlessly into her work.

Today's cooks and diners are so accustomed to modern equipment that the names and purposes of traditional vessels have become obscure. Prema's detailed notes on different types of vessels and their uses are enlightening. It is surprising to note that adai was not traditionally made on a dosa tawa but on a specific shallow, concave girdle called adai madukku. The evolution of Indian cookers is equally fascinating and has been documented. The author says that before today's pressure cooker, there were the Icmic cookers from Bengal, the Santosh cookers from Bombay, and the Rukmini cookers from Tamil Nadu.



Besides the right equipment, accurate measurements can make or break a recipe. Prema begins her discussion on measurements with the example of author Champalakshmi Ammal from Srirangam, whose cookbook uses measures like pinches, finger lengths, and fistfuls. However, she also provides a comprehensive conversion chart that translates grams and kilograms into spoons and cups. While this chart may feel redundant in an era of voice-activated assistants, it still serves as a thoughtful inclusion. This section is followed by pre-cooking essentials, covering basics such as soaking and achieving the perfect consistencies for sugar and jaggery syrup.

The recipes in the book begin on page 35, starting with offerings served in temples across India. It features 22 recipes, including akkara adisil from Srivilliputhur inspired by Andal's verses, Kanchipuram idli made in baskets, and peda from the Puri Jagannath temple. Two distinct puliodharai recipes have also been included – one from the Parthasarathy temple in Triplicane, Chennai, and another from the Tiru Narayana temple in Melkote, Karnataka.

This encyclopaedic cookbook features over 100 recipes, complemented by aesthetic yet simple food photography and notes about Prema's friends and family who contributed their recipes. It offers a diverse range of dishes, from bisi bele bath and ellorai (sesame seed rice) to salad, dal, gojju, kuzhambu, rasam, sweets, and tiffin. Recipes from other regions of India, such as til pitha from Assam, madra from Himachal Pradesh, and pazhutha pavakkai thokku (ripe bitter gourd chutney) from Kongunadu, are also included. Notably, none of the recipes uses onion or garlic, and the book provides ingredient substitution suggestions and pairing notes.

Originally published in 2013, this edition has been released by Harper Collins. Pure Vegetarian *is priced at ₹1,299.*

Ending the tragedy

Manipur requires a leadership change for a political solution

The adage "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results" holds true for Manipur. It has been more than a year and a half since ethnic violence erupted between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities in the State. The initial clashes resulted in scores of deaths, and, since then, parts of the State, many of which are under the effective control of security forces, have witnessed sporadic but intense incidents of violence. Despite this, there has been little effort toward peace or reconciliation. Even areas such as Jiribam, which initially escaped the violence, are now engulfed in conflict, as recent events have shown. The situation in Manipur is no longer just about identifying who triggered the violence or what administrative steps are needed to stop it. The violence has spiralled to the point where ethnic divisions have become entrenched in the social fabric of the State. Every act of violence now leads to calls for retribution against entire communities, from both the Meitei and Kuki-Zo sides. Armed non-state actors, some of whom are openly or covertly supported by elected representatives, seem to control the situation, while civil society groups are marginalised.

This descent into chaos in one of India's most culturally rich and diverse border States has unfolded rapidly under the watch of an incompetent and indifferent government, which has failed to take responsibility or implement any meaningful solutions. Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and his cabinet have long lost credibility due to their mishandling of the crisis. The Union government, too, shares the blame for allowing the situation to persist. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has remained largely silent on the issue, while Union Home Minister Amit Shah has avoided taking any decisive action to address the crisis, presumably to avoid upsetting the political balance in the State. The role of security forces, while important, cannot be the sole solution to an ethnic conflict of this nature. What is required is political will and the ability to advance meaningful dialogue that can bring the community representatives closer to finding a compromise. The Union government's refusal to even consider a change in leadership, as suggested by the Bharatiya Janata Party's ally, the National People's Party (NPP), has only allowed the situation to fester. The NPP's withdrawal of support from the government signals a growing recognition that the current leadership is not capable of addressing the crisis. It is now clear that a leadership change is necessary to chart a new course for Manipur. A political solution can be based only on consensus and compromise and these are impossible with a government headed by a partisan politician who is hoping to benefit from a polarisation of people on communal lines.

New heroes

India needs a young set of cricketers to come good against Australia

It has been a tale of contrasting Indian performances in cricket over the last few weeks. India's home dominance, especially in Tests, ground to a halt as the visiting New Zealanders swept the series 3-0. However, an entirely different squad under Suryakumar Yadav donned their blue jerseys, flew to South Africa and won the T20I series 3-1. An inexplicable fragility against spin in Tests and a domineering aura in T20Is are evident. While this backstory has its distinct ebb and flow, the next seven weeks should offer an entirely new perspective, besides the attendant hype, as India and Australia clash in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series with the first Test commencing at Perth's massive Optus Stadium on Friday. With five Tests scheduled across Australia through the southern summer, one of cricket's greatest rivalries will get a fresh start. While the microscopic tale is centred around how this series would evolve, the macroscopic outlook would be focused on the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) rankings in which India currently trails topper Australia in the points percentage tally. A berth in the WTC final is no longer an automatic choice, and if India wants to qualify on its own merit, it needs to win four of these five Tests, or else await the permutation-combination of results involving other teams.

Over the last decade, beyond the subcontinent, India has largely shed its poor-traveller tag and the two Test series triumphs in Australia during the 2018-19 and 2020-21 tours, is a reflection of this resilience. It is this slice of history that adds more bite as Jasprit Bumrah's men step out for their latest cricketing joust. With regular skipper Rohit Sharma, currently on a paternity break, set to lead from the second Test, India will gain added experience in its ranks. Injury concerns over Shubman Gill, and the absence of Mohammed Shami, wending his way back from a surgery, may add to the worry lines but in the 2020-21 tour, India was literally the walking wounded, and yet Ajinkya Rahane led a second-string unit to a remarkable 2-1 victory. It is this abiding strength in the Indian ranks that has unsettled the Australians, and Pat Cummins and his men are wary of their rivals despite the latest reversal against New Zealand. A lot will hinge on spearhead Bumrah's spells and the ability of the batters to string vital partnerships. Both Virat Kohli and Rohit are suffering a low patch in Tests and if these seniors can turn it around, India will be better served. An interesting series is on the cards and perhaps new heroes will rise.

India needs an environmental health regulatory agency

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan

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Kalpana Balakrishnan

Dean (Research), Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, (SRIHER), Chennai

Vijay Shankar Balakrishnan

a science journalist with over 12 years of experience covering the life sciences, the environment, and public health, and has worked for the World Health Organization

The 2024 Conference of Parties (COP 29) ends in Baku, Azerbaijan today. As a global voice for developing countries, India will push for ambitious climate mitigation financing from developed nations. At the same time, pollutants in our air, water and land continue to pose grave health risks. According to the Emissions Gap Report 2024 from the United Nations Environment Programme, India has seen over 6% more greenhouse gas emissions than the previous year. These two examples show that India is at a critical juncture in its environmental and public health journey.

As a nation, India continues to experience rapid economic growth, so the interdependencies between climate, environment, health, and the economy are undeniable but capacities to address these issues holistically are limited. It is time for India to establish an environmental health regulatory agency (EHRA), which could lead to more comprehensive and cohesive environmental governance that focuses simultaneously on pollution control and health risk mitigation.

The urgency of integration

There are profound and immediate environmental health challenges to address in India. Numerous epidemiological studies conducted across multiple States and rural and urban populations have uncovered the detrimental health effects of exposure to air, water and soil pollutants, which include a wide range of non-communicable diseases. For example, exposure to air pollution, $PM_{2.5}$ in particular, is now known to be associated with respiratory, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, pregnancy outcomes, child growth and development and even mental health disorders. This poses risks to the most vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and financially poor groups.

Building on efforts of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), India's current environmental governance model needs to be more integrated with health. The CPCB focuses on pollution control, while the MoEFCC handles broader environmental policies, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) undertakes integrated disease surveillance and management. There is a disconnect between environmental monitoring, health impact assessments, and emissions control, given little to no data flow across these Ministries.

A centralised agency such as an EHRA could integrate environmental and health data, allowing policymakers to track, regulate, and mitigate these impacts effectively, with much-needed inter-disciplinarity.

There are examples to inspire us: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Germany's Federal Environment Agency (UBA), and Japan's Ministry of the Environment (MOE) provide robust frameworks that bridge environmental management with public health protection.

The EPA's approach covers a lot of ground – it regulates air and water quality, manages waste, and controls toxic substances while relying on integrated science assessments that include health together with vigorous enforcement. Germany's UBA focuses on environmental policy, managing air, water and waste regulations while championing sustainable energy and climate initiatives. Japan's MOE tackles pollution, chemical safety, and ecosystem protection. It collaborates with health and science agencies to monitor environmental health, enforce pollution controls, and address urban pollution and radiation issues.

The explicit integration of environment and health is part of the routine operational framework at these global agencies. Having an agency such as an EHRA in place could help India formulate a unified response to all types of pollution, advocate cumulative accountability mechanisms and collaborate with international bodies to negotiate for and adopt best practices that simultaneously address health and environment.

A data-driven, evidence-based framework

Effective regulation is built upon reliable and context-specific data. In this context, significant global funding is invested in environmental health effects research to establish a robust evidence base for policies. Even though organisations such as the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) provide essential support for environmental health research, their impact is somewhat limited without a central body to bring together and translate this data into practical policies.

An EHRA would enable India to adopt an evidence-informed and science-driven regulatory framework, commissioning studies specific to the nation's unique environmental health challenges, such as poor air quality, vector-borne diseases, effects of persistent organic chemicals and heavy metal exposures in the context of changing land-use patterns and the consequences of climate change on health systems. Integrating health impact assessments (HIAs) into all significant projects, such as urban development and infrastructure planning, would allow decision-makers to understand and mitigate health risks before they escalate.

Contrary to concerns that environmental regulation may impede economic growth, an EHRA could promote sustainable practices that drive innovation, create green jobs, and support long-term financial resilience. For instance, the U.S. EPA has shown that its presence and work do not hinder economic growth but spur investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and pollution prevention while also increasing life expectancy.

India's economic trajectory need not be at odds with environmental health. An incentivised energy transition and public health campaigns around environmental health could encourage enterprises to transition to cleaner technologies. An EHRA can develop policy instruments that will help the nation align environmental health objectives with economic policies, which in turn would promote sustainable development that benefits the environment, public health, and the economy at the same time.

Involving the public is essential for the success of environmental health initiatives. In India, an EHRA could be critical in educating citizens on environmental health risks and empowering communities to advocate cleaner air, water, and healthier living conditions. Citizen initiatives and the role of non-governmental organisations are pivotal, given the need for accountability to start bottom-up, from the local bodies and panchayat levels. The role of communicators and journalists is crucial in highlighting and supporting these initiatives.

India has signed the Paris Agreement and has committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. An EHRA would be instrumental in helping India meet these commitments by aligning national policies with global standards. It would also contribute to collective efforts to tackle climate and health challenges including addressing transboundary issues.

Environmental health issues vary significantly across India's regions, so we must move from a one-size-fits-all approach and localise interventions. An EHRA could work closely with State and municipal governments to ensure the development and enforcement of policies that are tailored to environmental solutions for the unique needs of each area. By developing a granular national platform for monitoring and accountability, India could track health outcomes in detail, leading to more effective and timely responses to local needs

Building accountability

Establishing an EHRA in India would not be without challenges, from bureaucratic inertia to resistance from industry stakeholders wary of regulation. However, clear frameworks for inter-ministerial coordination, measurable objectives, and cross-sectoral cooperation could help overcome these barriers. An EHRA should be operationally independent, guided by scientific expertise, and empowered to enforce policies that prioritise public health.

India's recent successes in meeting renewable energy targets highlight the nation's capacity for ambitious, systemic change. An EHRA could build on these achievements to strengthen India's governance of its environmental health crisis by framing pollution control as both a public health imperative and an economic opportunity.

> Having such an agency in India, which it currently lacks, would look at the interlinked issues of climate, environment, health and the economy in a holistic way

A bilateral investment treaty with a 'bit' of change

Prabhash Ranjan

a Professor and Director, Centre for International Investment and Trade Laws, Jindal Global Law School

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which was signed earlier this year was recently made public. This BIT, which will replace the 2014 India-UAE investment treaty, is critical. It reveals India's latest investment treaty practice and might elucidate India's ongoing negotiations with the United Kingdom and the European Union. A typical BIT should accomplish two objectives. First, it should balance the competing goals of investment protection and the state's sovereign right to regulate. Second, it should contain unambiguous provisions to reduce the discretion of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) tribunals.

Departures from the Model

Though India adopted a Model BIT in 2015, it has barely managed to sign a handful of BITs based on this model. Intriguingly, the India-UAE BIT departs from the Model BIT on some significant issues.

First, it provides that a foreign investor must exhaust local remedies for at least three years before bringing an ISDS claim. This period in the Model BIT and subsequent BITs that India signed with countries such as Belarus and Kyrgyzstan is five years. Several countries lament that five years is too long. Given the overstretched Indian judicial system, it is unlikely that a foreign investor's legal dispute with the state would be resolved in five years. It seems India has taken these concerns on board and softened its stand. This gives foreign investors quicker access to ISDS, thus, bringing the pendulum somewhat back to the pole of investment protection. A shorter waiting period to invoke ISDS does not mean that India is exposing itself to treaty claims, as asserted by some. The function of investment treaties is to safeguard foreign investment from sovereign regulatory abuse. As long as India does not indulge in regulatory abuse it need not worry about ISDS claims.

Second, the definition of investment in the India-UAE BIT states that for an enterprise to qualify as an investment, and thus be eligible for treaty protection, it should possess key economic characteristics such as a commitment of capital, profit expectation, and risk assumption. The criterion that the investment should, in addition, be significant for the development of the host state, which is present in the Model BIT, has been done away with. This is a welcome development clarifying the jurisdictional question. Several ISDS tribunals have held that proving foreign investment is significant for the development of the host state, is an inherently value-laden exercise. Thus, by removing this subjective element from the definition of investment, India and the UAE have reduced arbitral discretion. At any rate, when a lawfully created enterprise satisfies other key economic investment characteristics, it is presumably significant for the host state's development.

Greater clarity

Third, Article 4 of the India-UAE BIT, which talks of 'treatment of investments', specifically lists when state action will amount to a treaty violation such as when there is a denial of justice or when there is a fundamental breach of due process in dealing with investment. These grounds are mentioned in a similar provision in the Model BIT. However, in the Model BIT, these grounds are linked to customary international law (CIL) whereas in Article 4 of the India-UAE BIT, there is no reference to CIL. The content of CIL concerning various aspects of foreign investment is not settled. Thus, a reference to CIL in the treaty, as numerous ISDS cases show, gives too much discretion to these tribunals. Consequently, Article 4 brings greater clarity for states and investors and curbs arbitral discretion.

A continuity

Notwithstanding some departures, the India-UAE BIT establishes a continuity of India's investment treaty practice. For instance, the India-UAE BIT, like the Model, does not contain the most favoured nation (MFN) provision, which is a core non-discrimination standard in international economic relations. Likewise, state action on taxation is outside the scope of the India-UAE BIT. Thus, arguably, a foreign investor cannot challenge tax measures even if they are abusive. This maximises the state's regulatory power at the cost of investment protection. Like the Model BIT, Article 14.6(i) of the India-UAE BIT bars the jurisdiction of an ISDS tribunal to review the 'merits' of a domestic court decision. Arguably, 'merits' means that ISDS tribunals should not act as a court of appeal. However, 'merits' can also have an alternative interpretation.

Since the investor will bring an ISDS claim on the same issue adjudicated by the domestic court, the state can plausibly argue that the case is on the 'merits' of the domestic court decision. This might impede the tribunal's ability to hear the case. On some issues, the India-UAE BIT goes beyond the Model. For instance, it specifically disallows third-party funding and the unavailability of ISDS if an allegation of fraud or corruption is made against the investor.

One does not know whether the departures from the Model BIT signify India's change of heart or are specific to the UAE. Developed countries would be pleased with India's softening of the five-year domestic litigation requirement. However, they would remain concerned about India's continued stand of excluding MFN and taxation issues from the BIT's ambit.

> Despite some departures, the India-UAE bilateral investment treaty establishes a continuity of India's investment treaty practice

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Speech and arrest

The sentencing of an actor for hate speech should serve as a precedent. One expects the same yardstick to be applied in hate speech directed against some other communities also (Editorial, November 21).

R. Shankaran,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

The actor is known to deliver fiery and distasteful speeches on a number of issues. This is certainly not the first time of transgression by her. Perhaps the media needs to follow the interviews and speeches made by various public personalities. In a mature democracy such as India, everyone has the responsibility to express their opinions but they must maintain a certain level of decency on social media and in public spaces.

C.V. Vasudevan,
Chennai

It is worth noting that many public figures make intemperate remarks without facing the consequences, simply because they hold positions of power. Still, the Kasthuri episode serves as a reminder that public speakers must exercise restraint.

P. Sreenivasan,
Chennai

For decades, the Tamil Brahmin community has been the target of demeaning portrayal in Tamil films and public meetings. Yet not a single person has been taken to task. Punitive action for hate speech must be taken independent of the community being attacked.

J. Hareesh,
Houston, Texas, U.S.

Tennis legend

Bidding farewell to one's favourite sportsperson is overwhelming. Rafael Nadal, a self-made glorious jewel in the world of tennis. needs no introduction. In an age of star tantrums, Nadal never hurt the sport that looked after him. He will always shine ('Sport' page, November 21).

Kirti Wadhawan,
Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Is social media doing more harm than good to democracy?

Alan Rusbridger

Editor of 'Prospect Magazine', former editor-in-chief of 'The Guardian' and a member of Meta's Oversight Board which makes content and policy recommendations for Facebook, Instagram, and Threads

Pratik Sinha

Co-founder and editor of AltNews, a fact-checking website

PARLEY

In the U.K., *The Guardian* newspaper announced earlier this month that it will no longer be posting on X, claiming that it is "a toxic media platform" and that its owner, Elon Musk, "has been able to use its influence to shape political discourse." Is social media a useful tool or is it becoming a threat to democratic societies? Alan Rusbridger and Pratik Sinha discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Priscilla Jebaraj**. Edited excerpts:

How much should a news outlet or even regular users be worried about the ownership of a social media platform in deciding where to post and where to consume news?

Alan Rusbridger: It is a real dilemma because Twitter (now X) was for many years a really wonderful place for posting news, finding audiences, finding out news, and building relationships. In normal circumstances, who owns a media platform shouldn't worry us too much. But Elon Musk has so dominated Twitter, the platform that he bought, and insisted that people follow him, that it is difficult to ignore the question of ownership.

Pratik Sinha: We should be worried. One should think of online spaces just the way we think of offline spaces. Offline, we try to quit toxic spaces and some people have the privilege of being able to do so. When you are able to quit a toxic relationship, typically it is because you are financially independent. *The Guardian* is such a huge organisation that even if it doesn't have traffic from X, it is okay for the newspaper. X is probably just a little more toxic than other platforms. So, it is a privilege that one is able to quit a more toxic platform and focus on others.

It is important to know who owns media organisations, but it is not the only factor. One also has to look at day-to-day reportage. Had Mr. Musk bought X and not used it as a political tool, it would have been a different matter. But not only did he buy it; he uses it as a personal tool and not just a political tool. The algorithm has been tweaked to ensure that everyone on X sees his posts. That is where the problem lies.

How important is social media to disseminate content?

PS: Very important, unfortunately. Our primary sources of information have become social media platforms which are controlled by multi-billion dollar companies. We have to use these platforms because, how else do we reach out to people? And that also makes censorship easy because the government only has to have a relationship with these two or three platforms, the kind of relationships that governments typically have with monopolies, to ensure that the information that should reach citizens is censored. We are in a tricky space because we have no free platforms where information can reach citizens without many layers of filters.

The company headquarters of X in downtown San Francisco. AP

AR: It used to be really important. There are about 350 million people on X, so that is a considerable audience. In the digital world, for a long time, it was really important to be able to amplify journalism through that platform. But people who analyse these things say that the number of referrals from social media, and to some extent from search engines, has declined.

Are some platforms worse than others?

AR: I think the problem is that there is a huge mismatch between the editorial standards and values that the best news organisations represent and the editorial standards of Mr. Musk. He has none. He has abandoned all the trust and safety teams. He doesn't believe in content moderation; he sees it as censorship. The attempts by regulators and advertisers to try and clean up X have been met with the most foul-mouthed rejection. He also holds contempt for the free press. He is constantly telling people that they shouldn't believe anything on the legacy media and that the only place you can find the truth nowadays is X. So it is an act of peculiar masochism to keep appearing on his platform when he despises us. That is why people are thinking, well, let's go somewhere where we are valued and where facts and truth and journalism still count for something.

What alternatives do you think are better?

AR: There is Mastodon, which everyone found extremely hard to use, so it has not really worked. There is Threads, which has become quite popular quite quickly. And there is Bluesky, which a lot of journalists are now fleeing to. There is a view that you shouldn't moderate anything. That is not a view that has widely brought favour in the world apart from the U.S. under Donald Trump. Most people feel that there is a lot of illegal, harmful content which should be moderated in some way.

> Any communication system which works well is great for citizens and for democracy. But when that same communication system is subsumed by the very system that is committing the atrocity, that is a problem
>
> PRATIK SINHA

PS: The problem is centralisation of information. What I consider as true alternatives are decentralised systems. Mastodon and Bluesky have been designed to be decentralised. I don't consider Threads as an alternative because it is just another product by a monopoly which is not decentralised, though it is attempting to include some decentralisation features. Alternatives will not be as convenient to use and we should be okay with that because it is the only way that these platforms will have the opportunity to improve.

Misinformation is platform-agnostic. Quantitatively, it is very difficult to say whether there is more on one platform, because it also depends on usage. For instance, in India, there is more misinformation on WhatsApp simply because the usage of WhatsApp is high in India. What is different is the amount of hate speech that is being put out on different platforms. All platforms have a policy vis-a-vis hate speech, but the question is whether these policies are being implemented or not. I don't think there is a single X employee dedicated to moderating Indian content on the platform. Everyone was fired. So, maybe in that particular aspect, Facebook might be slightly better than X because people are moderating content there.

What kind of checks should platforms be putting in place to reduce such toxicity?

PS: They need to invest money in people to moderate content. When riots had happened in Sri Lanka, Facebook did not have a single moderator in Sri Lanka. There were a few sitting in an office in Hyderabad. When the Rohingya exodus happened, there was no moderator in a local language. If you look at the number of moderators per million of population, India would be one of the lowest in the world. In India, there are many languages and nuance. Dog whistling is different in every language. None of these platforms are able to do that because they don't want to invest the money.

AR: The best platforms are developing systems and it is bound to involve a lot of AI to try and identify people who are trying to cause real harm. During the recent Southport riots in England, Mr. Musk himself was re-posting really dangerous stuff. You can't have social media being used to organise murder. That should be obvious. So, whether it is human fact-checkers and moderators or AI systems and content management moderation systems, most people think that you have got to have some systems to catch the worst behaviour. Otherwise, this technology can be used to cause immense harm.

What role do you think social media can play in building democracy?

PS: We confuse a communication system with a communication system controlled by monopolies. Any communication system which works well is great for citizens and for democracy; it will be used by people to put their voice out. We know what is happening in Palestine because it is being broadcast. The number of people who died in the Iraq war was much higher than the number of people who have died in Palestine. But Iraq happened when there was no social media. But when that same communication system is subsumed by the system committing the atrocity, it is a problem.

AR: Social media at its best is marvellous. On a platform like Facebook, there are, I think, three billion people who have the ability to publish and connect with each other. They are mostly using it for good purposes to organise, or for innocent purposes. So, it would be terrible to blacken all social media, abandon it or clamp down on it. But I think it is possible to stamp out the dangerous way of using social media.

We [news outlets] need to start by choosing a platform which is run on ethical lines and recreate the kind of reasonably civilised discourse which was good for journalism. From what I have seen of Bluesky, people are rejoicing in the fact that it feels purer.

PS: We have to have media and information literacy classes in schools where children learn how to look at different sources of information and process them. We need to think about decentralised communication systems. There will be challenges, but those aren't insurmountable.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

Politics between polls

Elections are exciting for reporters. But it is what happens between them that enlightens us about the political shifts on the ground

Meera Srinivasan

On the morning of November 16, 2024, I was following the final tally of preferential votes secured by candidates in Sri Lanka's recent general elections. President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's National People's Power (NPP) alliance won a historic mandate of more than a two-thirds majority. Vijitha Herath, the NPP candidate in Colombo's neighbouring Gampaha district, broke records by winning more than 7 lakh votes. He has been named Foreign Minister in the new government.

At the same time, a memory popped up on my social media. It was a short video clip of my interview with Mr. Herath six years ago. On November 16, 2018, Mr. Herath was among those injured when some people in the Rajapaksa camp violently attacked Members of Parliament who were challenging the sudden appointment of Mahinda Rajapaksa as Prime Minister in place of Ranil Wickremesinghe, who had been abruptly sacked by President Maithripala Sirisena. Sri Lanka was in the grip of a political impasse for some seven weeks until the Supreme Court ruled that Mr. Sirisena's move was illegal, and Mr. Wickremesinghe was reinstated.

In a fascinating coincidence, Mr. Herath, who in 2018 was a legislator with the opposition Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), made headlines the same day six years later as part of a new political force that has decimated the island's old political class, including the Rajapaksas, Mr. Sirisena, and Mr. Wickremesinghe.

It is as if decades happened in these six years in Sri Lanka. During this time, the island witnessed the deadly Easter Sunday serial blasts in April 2019, the election victory of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in November 2019, the pandemic from 2020, Mr. Gotabaya's mighty fall in July 2022 in the wake of a crippling economic crisis and a citizens' uprising, and now, the meteoric rise of Mr. Dissanayake and his political alliance. The near-erasure from Sri Lanka's electoral map of the country's traditional, once-powerful political parties and the political elite that controlled them signals a tectonic shift.

While polls are exciting news events for the media, reporters learn a lot more while covering what happens between elections. What seems a "tectonic" electoral shift is often the cumulative effect of many complex political changes on the ground, invariably tethered to how most people in a country are doing. As reporters, we have a distinct advantage. We don't have to predict precise poll outcomes; all we need to do is listen to diverse voices to try and capture voter sentiment in our coverage.

Invariably, this sort of ground reporting allows us to glean some clear pointers to a likely poll outcome, even if not the extent of someone's win. Both the defeat of Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2015 and the victory of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2019 were not entirely surprising for many of us who report from Sri Lanka. That said, there are specific results that surprise us at times, either because our reading was biased or simply wrong. Either way, there is incentive to return to good, old-fashioned reporting.

In the case of the NPP's victory in Sri Lanka's recent election, the story, in a sense, began in 2018. With just six MPs in the 225-member House then, the JVP made compelling interventions in Parliament, besides moving the Supreme Court with others against Mr. Sirisena's anti-democratic, unconstitutional move. The NPP was set up the following year as a counter to the political establishment, which was tainted by allegations of serious corruption and nepotism. Not long after, the country witnessed an unprecedented mass struggle in 2022, staggering in its magnitude and intensity. The headless citizens' movement did what the political opposition couldn't: eject the powerful Rajapaksas from office. Two years later, the NPP is in power now, with 159 out of the 225 members in the new Parliament convened on November 21.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Under a blanket of toxic smog

Police personnel walk through Shakti Sthal, a memorial for former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in New Delhi on November 19. The air quality in the capital remained in the 'severe' or 'severe plus' category for days before impoving to the 'very poor' category on Thursday. In view of the situation, the Delhi government ordered half of its employees to work from home and urged the private sector to do the same. The Centre's pollution watchdog mandated the closure of schools in Delhi-NCR. ANI

FROM THE ARCHIVES — The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 22, 1974

Small ads. on post cards proposed

New Delhi, Nov. 21: The Communications Minister, Mr. S.D. Sharma, told the Lok Sabha to-day that small advertisements on post cards without reducing writing space and putting up of hoardings in the compounds of post office buildings were proposed to increase the revenue of the Post and Telegraphs Department.

Replying to the debate on the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Bill, 1974, already passed by the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Sharma said certain other proposals were being considered to raise the huge funds required to improve the post and telegraph services.

The Bill which seeks to empower the Government to make rules for the levy of charges in respect of any application for providing any telegraph line, appliance or apparatus, was later passed by the Lok Sabha. The bill also validated the charges already levied from December 1, 1969.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 22, 1924

Public health in Burma

Rangoon, Nov. 21: His Excellency the Governor laid the foundation stone of Burma's Institute of Public Health, named after his Excellency, this evening. Major G.G. Jolly, Director of Public Health, in welcoming His Excellency and others emphasised the necessity for such an institute. He compared a public health department without laboratories to a backward child that has not yet developed its sensory faculties.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The bonded labourers who have not received financial aid

4,100 A Bench of Justices B. R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan termed as "alarming" that, out of the 5,264 released bonded labourers (these were the figures placed before it) in Uttar Pradesh , only 1,101 had received immediate financial assistance. PTI

Finland households without electricity in the snowstorm

80,000 Storm Jari came to Finland on Wednesday, with winds on Thursday measuring up to 25 metres (82 feet) per second. The poor weather conditions led to several road accidents and damage to forests. AFP

The climate finance required by developing nations

500 in $ billion. A group of developing nations called on developed economies at COP29 for at least $500 billion per year in climate finance. "We need a figure as a headline to determine whether we are making progress," said the chairman of the Group of 77. AFP

Shiites killed in sectarian violence in Pakistan on Thursday

14 Gunmen opened fire on passenger vehicles carrying Shiite Muslim civilians in restive northwest Pakistan on Thursday, killing at least 14 people and wounding 30 others in one of the deadliest such attacks in recent years in the region, police said. The attack happened in Kurram. AP

Persons booked in Maharashtra for vandalising booths

40 Police have registered a case against around 40 persons after they allegedly vandalised three polling booths at Ghatnandur in Maharashtra's Beed district and damaged some EVMs when voting for the assembly polls were underway. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Is Delhi becoming an uninhabitable city?

Delhi is perhaps going to become, if it has not already, an uninhabitable city for two different reasons. In the winters, pollution levels peak, while during summers, the heat waves are unbearable, both affecting Delhi's poor disproportionately

EXPLAINER

Rohit Azad
Shouvik Chakraborty

Air quality index (AQI), according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), is a measure of the concentration of eight pollutants – particulate matter (PM)10, PM2.5, nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulphur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O3), ammonia (NH3), and lead (Pb) – in the air at a monitoring location. A sub-index is calculated for each of these pollutants (not all may be measured at every station); and the worst among them is the AQI for that location. So, AQI transforms complex air quality data into an index we can understand.

How uninhabitable is Delhi?

Delhi is perhaps going to become, if it has not already, an uninhabitable city for two different reasons. In winters (October-February), pollution levels peak, while during summers (April-June), the heat waves are unbearable, both affecting Delhi's poor disproportionately. This piece concerns itself with air pollution. This article will focus on the PM2.5 in particular because it dominates the AQI reading in Delhi and is quite dangerous as it is likely to travel to the deeper parts of the lungs owing to its extremely small size, the largest of which is 30 times thinner than human hair.

Chart 1 shows how the quality of air has been over a period of seven years (2017-2023). AQI is categorised in six ranges in India. We have combined some of them to represent as: good (0-50), satisfactory to moderate (51-200), and poor to severe (201 and above). A few things stand out. One, Delhi has had only two days of healthy air per year. Two, more than half a year people are inhaling air unfit for breathing. Three, and quite remarkably, even for 2020, a lockdown year, things were only marginally better. It's clear there is something systemically wrong with the system.

Why is Delhi's air quality so poor?

The government often tells us that stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana, and U.P. is responsible for Delhi's pollution. It's a half-truth. We pick the most intense days of November this year when stubble burning's contribution to PM2.5 has been at its peak (in the range of 15-35%). Chart 2 plots the actual AQI against a hypothetical scenario of zero stubble burning, and the result is startling. Not even on one of these days would the AQI have fallen below the very poor AQI benchmark (300). This exercise is not to downplay the role of stubble burning. It is to show that it is a red herring used by the two warring political parties, one which runs the Union Territory and the other this country, to avoid acting on the problem in any serious manner.

What are the factors contributing to the AQI other than stubble burning?

An extensive 2023 report prepared by IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, TERI New Delhi, and Airshed Kanpur shows that, even during winter months, when sources of pollution external to Delhi are at their peak, half of the PM2.5 levels can be apportioned to Delhi itself (Chart 3). Vehicles alone contribute 58% – 34% from the exhaust and 24% due to wear and tear of tyres/brakes – to this total. The only realistic solution to air pollution is a massive shift in the way Delhi travels, that is, from private (cars and motorcycles) to public transport running on cleaner energy, with last mile connectivity, a step which will bring the number of vehicles on the road down significantly.

Why are the winters so much worse?

The concentration of pollutants in the air depends not just on emissions but also on many meteorological factors – temperature, wind direction/speed, and rain, among other things. Hot air, being lighter, moves up (thereby carrying the pollutants with it), whereas cold air traps pollutants and keeps them closer to the ground. Similarly, wind can disperse the pollutants, while rain can force the most common air pollutants, like PM2.5 and PM10, to the ground. Cold air with slow wind speed and no rains make Delhi a pot of pollution with a lid on.

Chart 4 shows that for the months which have a moderate AQI, either the wind speed is relatively higher (February-June) or rainfall is greater (July-September) than the rest of the year. Both these factors, aided by warmer air, lift the air quality of Delhi from poor/severe to moderate. Given that Delhi's own emissions are not winter-specific, its air quality would have been poor throughout the year but for these favourable factors from March through September.

What is the impact?

According to the WHO, 'almost every organ in the body can be impacted by air pollution' and some air pollutants can enter the bloodstream via the lungs which can lead to systemic inflammation and carcinogenicity.

A study in the *Lancet Planet Health* journal shows that, in 2019, an estimated 1.67 million deaths in India were attributable to pollution, and one out of 10 deaths were caused by ambient particulate matter (PM) pollution. The study categorises the deaths attributable to ambient PM, household, and ambient ozone pollution. Chart 5 contrasts the death rates (number of deaths per 1,00,000 population) at the all-India level with those of Delhi.

While Delhi's death rate attributable to household pollution is negligible in comparison to the Indian average, it is higher than the Indian average for ambient PM pollution, which reiterates the unhealthy levels of persistent exposure to PM2.5 and PM10 one has throughout the year. More importantly, this health impact is not undifferentiated across class. The poor and the marginalised suffer disproportionately more than the others. Based on a photo/data essay in the *New York Times*, Chart 6 plots the real-time exposure to PM2.5 for two similar-aged children in Delhi, Monu, who comes from a poor neighbourhood across the Yamuna and Aamya who comes from a more affluent family living in Greater Kailash. The shaded area between the two lines in Chart 6 is the class gap to pollution exposure. With some simplifying assumptions, the article argues that this kind of consistent exposure over a long term could shorten Monu's life by around five years, compared to Aamya (whose life expectancy also gets shortened). Children whose lungs are still developing get adversely affected, and within those, poor children lose much more than their more affluent counterparts.

Calling Delhi a gas chamber is, therefore, definitely not an exaggeration. Surely, we don't want our kids (or residents in general) to lose precious years of their lives because of what is a controllable problem. But it requires a political will and an imagination. Stopgap measures of odd-even, red-light on engine-off, water sprinklers every winter by the AAP government, which has now been in power for almost a decade, or distribution of masks by the BJP are mostly measures aimed at media management, which will have little to no impact on the problems at hand. The Modi government, by shifting the blame on the AAP government without taking any proactive steps itself, shows its absolute lack of sensitivity to the well-being of the citizens, including those who are based in the city.

Rohit Azad is a faculty at the Centre for Economics Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Shouvik Chakraborty is a Research Assistant Professor at the Political Economy Research Institute, Amherst, U.S.

Death by breath in Delhi

While Delhi's death rate attributable to household pollution is negligible in comparison to the Indian average, it is higher than the Indian average for ambient PM pollution, which reiterates the unhealthy levels of persistent exposure one has to PM2.5 and PM10 throughout the year

Chart 1: Quality of Delhi's air over time

Average number of days per year (2017-2023)

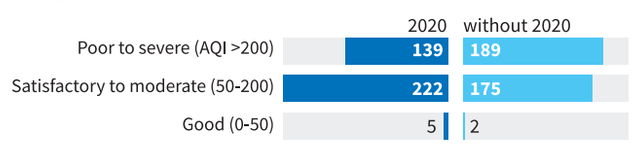
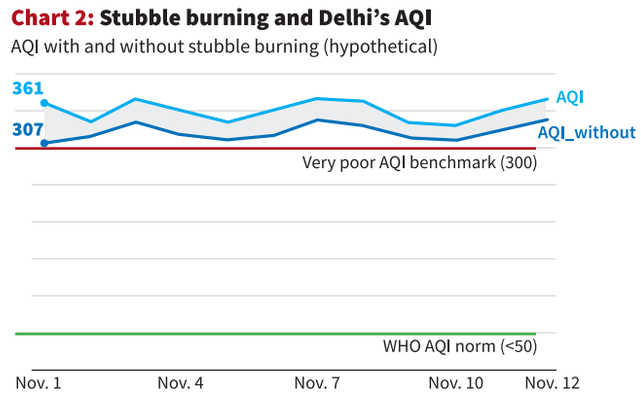


Chart 2: Stubble burning and Delhi's AQI

AQI with and without stubble burning (hypothetical)



1. PM2.5 figures are for Delhi ITO area 2. To construct the hypothetical AQI series without stubble burning, we have deducted the day specific contribution of stubble burning from PM2.5 and then converted those readings into CPCB's AQI calculator

Chart 3: Source apportionment of PM2.5 from within Delhi

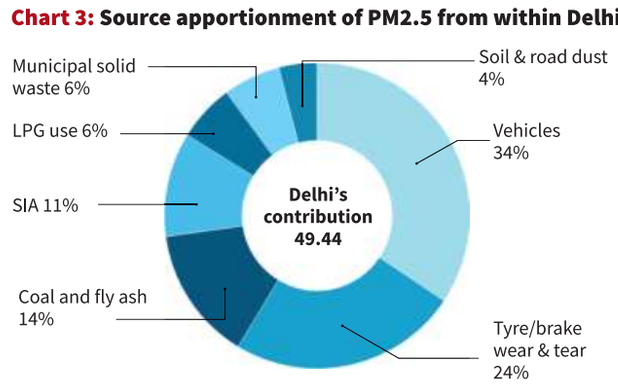


Chart 4: Weather factors and Delhi pollution

Wind speed and rainfall play a role in bringing AQI down

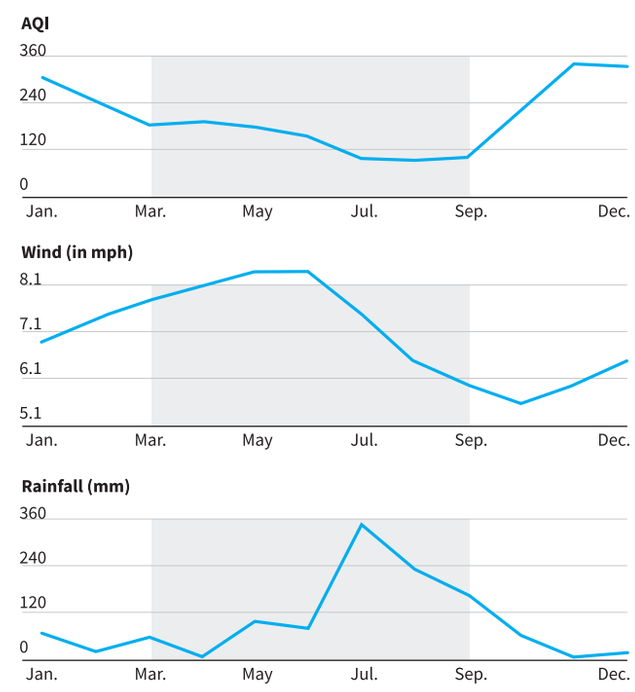


Chart 5: Death rates attributable to air pollution

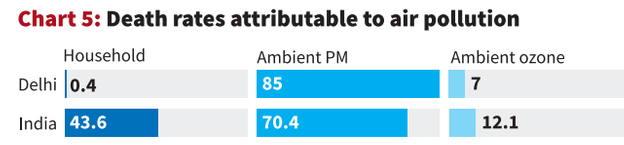
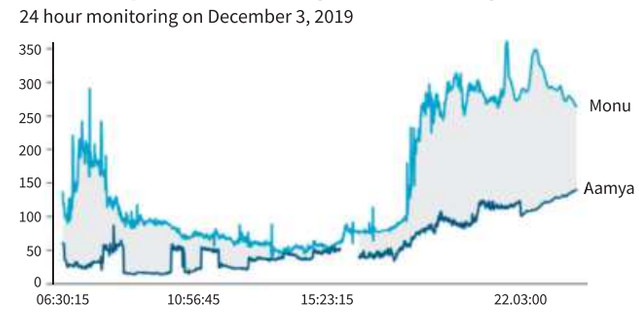


Chart 6: Exposure to PM2.5 by Monu and Aamya

24 hour monitoring on December 3, 2019



Source: Data for the charts are taken from sansad.in, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology Pune (IITM), CPCB, weatherspark.com, DPCC 2023 report, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Press Information Bureau (PIB), Lancet planet health, New York Times article

THE GIST

An extensive 2023 report prepared by IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, TERI New Delhi, and Airshed Kanpur shows that, even during winter months, when sources of pollution external to Delhi are at their peak, half of the PM2.5 levels can be apportioned to Delhi itself.

According to the WHO, 'almost every organ in the body can be impacted by air pollution' and some air pollutants can enter the bloodstream via the lungs which can lead to systemic inflammation and carcinogenicity.

Children whose lungs are still developing get adversely affected, and within those, poor children lose much more than their more affluent counterparts.

IN THE LIMELIGHT

A screengrab from *Awara*.

Remembering the first Indian Film Festival in China

From October 17 to 23, 1955, China hosted the Indian Republic Film Week showcasing the documentary series 'Art and Construction of India' alongside feature films like 'Awara', 'Do Bigha Zamin', and 'Aandhiyan'. These screenings took place across twenty cities in China

Zhou Xin

Born in China in the 1980s, I was raised amidst the melodic, if slightly off-key, renditions of "Awara hoon" by my parents. Their fondness for *Awara*, China's most beloved Indian film, spanned decades. And herein lies the deep affection that a generation of Chinese people had for Indian cinema. On this significant occasion, we honour Raj Kapoor as a cultural ambassador and the historic debut of Indian cinema in China, a moment that deserves enduring remembrance.

Debuting Indian cinema

Motivated by the spirit of Asian socialist camaraderie, in 1954, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made a historic visit to China, becoming the first leader from a non-socialist nation to do so. This visit paved the way for China and India to bring the highly acclaimed "Indian Film Festival," which had been a resounding success in the Soviet Union that year, to Chinese audiences. In 1955, *Awara* made its debut in China through this festival.

From October 17 to 23, 1955, China hosted the "Indian Republic Film Week" (hereinafter referred to as the "Indian Film Week"), showcasing the documentary series *Art and Construction of India* alongside feature films like *Awara*, *Do Bigha Zamin*, and *Aandhiyan*. These screenings took place across twenty cities, including Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai. The event concluded with an impressive viewership of over three million.

During the film week, China also extended an invitation to a 12-member delegation of Indian film industry professionals, headed by Prithviraj Kapoor, who portrayed Raj's father in *Awara*. The delegation received a cordial welcome from Premier Zhou Enlai, marking a historic moment as it was the first time that China had started dubbing Indian films, thus kicking off the initial wave of Indian cinema's popularity and acceptance in the country.

This article delves into the original reports from two predominant Chinese media outlets of the era, *People's Daily* and *Mass Film*, to reflect the sentiments of the Chinese cultural sphere and the general audience towards these Indian cinematic masterpieces.

Statements in official reports

The *People's Daily*, established in 1948 as the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China, dedicated significant coverage to the 1955 Indian Film Festival. On October 17, Vice Minister of Culture Xia Yan commemorated the opening of the film week, stating, "The Indian film delegation serves as an artistic, friendly, and peaceful ambassador from the Indian government and its people to China." The newspaper also documented the profound impact the Chinese audience's fervent reception had on the visiting Indian filmmakers, capturing a pivotal moment in the tapestry of Sino-Indian cultural exchanges characterised by mutual appreciation and understanding.

On October 18, 1955, at an exchange event at Dahua Cinema in Beijing, Prithviraj Kapoor's speech was constantly interrupted by applause from the audience. On the same day, at the Jiaodaokou Cinema in Beijing, Indian film delegation member and renowned progressive writer and film screenwriter Krishan Chandar was moved to express to the audience after seeing the warm welcome: "The presence of the Indian people and the voice of Indians in Chinese cinema is a symbol of the friendship and cooperation between India and China."

Within film culture

Mass Film, founded in June 1950, is the oldest and most influential popular film culture publication in China. The 19th issue of *Mass Film* in 1955 was a special issue for the Indian Film Week. This issue included articles written by famous Chinese writers Bing Xin and Zheng Zhenduo, the most famous Chinese director Cai Chusheng, and the lead actors of the Indian films *Do Bigha Zamin* and *Awara*.

Raj Kapoor and Nargis Dutt, who were unable to visit China, wrote articles for the Chinese magazine. Raj Kapoor points out, "The screening of Indian films in the People's Republic of China will greatly strengthen the long-standing cultural relationship between these two peace-loving countries... Its theme song, 'Awara Hoon', has also become one of the most beloved songs among Soviet youth... I hope that Chinese audiences, who are rapidly moving towards a perfect socialist society, will appreciate the exciting conflicts in this film."

Nargis published an article titled "I Saved the Soul of a Vagabond," in which she wrote at the end, "I would like to talk about the significance of the film *Awara* being shown in China. What I remember is the first significant contribution to strengthening the friendly relations between the peoples of India and China, especially between Indian and Chinese film workers, was a biographical film we produced in India several years ago called *The Immortal Story of Dr. Kotnis*. Dr. Kotnis came to China during the Anti-Japanese War and later sacrificed [himself] on the front line. The film was also very popular in India... The friendship and personal contact between Indian and Chinese film workers are developing more and more rapidly. Let me greet the Chinese youth in the name of Rita, my character in the film, and greet them for laying the foundation for a socialist society that will not produce 'vagrants.' I look forward to visiting China." Chinese writers, in addition to focusing on the three feature films, also showed great enthusiasm for the new independent India reflected in the documentary collection *Art and Architecture of India*. The famous writer and Chinese translator of Tagore's poetry, Ms. Bing Xin, detailed how she was impressed by the spirit of the Indian people in building water conservancies, the exquisite level of craftsmanship, and the rich resources of south India. Writer Zheng Zhenduo reviewed the brilliant civilisation of India, the ancient friendship between China and India, and the "estrangement" of the two countries in the recent hundred years. Through several parts of the documentary such as "Indian Water Conservancy" and "Song of South India," he sighed: "How hard Indian scientists, engineers, and the public are working for the long-term welfare of the Indian people! Their strength is so great! Their will and aspirations are far-reaching and strong!"

Renowned Chinese director Cai Chusheng celebrated the "Indian Film Week" in an article, noting its importance for China's film industry and cultural scene. "This is a significant event for the Chinese film industry and also a significant event in the cultural life of our people... The works all contain many wonderful songs, all of which are so harmonious and beautiful, playing a profound lyrical and descriptive role in the inner realm of the characters. This is a major feature of Indian national cinema, which we should deeply praise. These brilliant works... will certainly help our audience better understand our close neighbours – the great Indian nation. Long live Sino-Indian friendship! Long live peace!" If you search Chinese ordinary people' feelings about *Awara* and Raj Kapoor on Chinese websites, the comments are countless. But in short, these can be summarised by one audience's writing published in *People's Daily* on November 2, 1955, "The high Himalayas cannot separate the mutual care of the people," "Through the film story, we feel closer to the Indian people."

The writer is affiliated with the Beijing Foreign Studies University.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian Upendran

"Remember the Englishman we met last week? He's got the German measles.

"German measles! Poor Mike! he said he had to be back in London tomorrow because he didn't have any leave left."

"Well, if that's the case, then I guess he'll just have to take French leave."

"French leave? What's that?"

"That's when you're absent from work without actually applying for leave. You stay away without getting anybody's permission. The Americans call it "playing hooky".

"Mike will probably be 'playing hooky'. I don't think an Englishman would like the idea of being on French leave."

"True. The doctor has asked him to take complete rest for a few days."

"So I guess he'll just have to sleep and dream sweet dreams."

"You mean something like the American Dream?"

"The American Dream?"

"It's defined as 'an American ideal of a happy and successful life to which all may aspire'."

"What's so American about that dream? We all want to lead a happy and successful life. Anyway, right now Mike will probably be having nightmares about his boss. He's really scared of him."

"In that case, he should drink a lot of Scotch whisky and let Dutch courage do the rest."

"What is Dutch courage?"

"It is false courage that is gained from alcohol."

"German measles. American dream, French leave, Dutch courage. Why are you speaking like this today?"

"What's wrong? Is everything I say Greek and Latin to you?"

"Somewhat. Can we eat something? I'm feeling hungry."

"What shall we eat? French bread? French fries?"

"Anything. I am hungry."

"You'll have to wait. I have to have a bath first."

"A Turkish bath?"

"No, not a Turkish bath. But I'll be using a Turkish towel to dry myself."

"All right. Dry up and go and have your bath."

"How can I dry up before I take my bath?"

" 'Dry up' is an informal expression meaning 'stop talking'. In this sense, it is always used in the imperative."

"I see."

"I am glad you do."

Published in The Hindu on February 22, 1994.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

With the King Cobra being recently re-categorised into four distinct species, a quiz to test your knowledge of snakes

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
The common scientific name of the King Cobra is 'Ophiophagus hannah'. What does the Greek genus name allude to?

QUESTION 2
Apart from the Northern and Western Ghats species, which are the other two species of the King Cobra?

QUESTION 3
Which snake holds the record for being the longest in the world?

QUESTION 4
Why is the Black Mamba, one of the fastest and deadliest snakes in the world, so named?

QUESTION 5
Which is the only snake that can retract its fangs?

QUESTION 6
What is the common name for 'Crotalus cerastes' which comes from the way it moves?

QUESTION 7
Snakes smell through their tongues and pass it on to which structure on the roof of the mouth to interpret?

QUESTION 8
What is special about the Brahminy blind snake?

Visual question:
Identify this species considered the most venomous in the world.
ISTOCKPHOTO

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. Number of Tests India has won in Australia out of 52. **Ans: 9**
2. The ground in Australia which has been a hunting ground for India. **Ans: Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)**
3. This player had a identical bowling figure of 6 for 52 in each innings in India's first ever test win on Australian soil. **Ans: B.S. Chandrasekhar at MCG in December 1977**
4. Name the trio who have been part of all four wins in the last two series. **Ans: Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane and Rishabh Pant**
5. The only Indian to have taken more than 50 wickets on Australian soil. **Ans: Kapil Dev. 51 wickets in 11 tests**
6. The Indian batsmen that has figured in two triple century partnerships. **Ans: V.V. S Laxman**
7. Apart from BS Chandrasekhar, the other two bowlers who have taken 10 or more wickets in a test in Australia. **Ans: B.S. Bedi 10/194 at Perth in December 1977 and Anil Kumble 12/279 at SCG in January 2004**

Visual: Identify the player. **Ans: Vijay Hazare; he became the first Indian to score a hundred in each innings at Adelaide in January 1948**

Early Birds: Tamal Biswas| Dodo Jayaditya| Piyali Tuli| Abhay Krishan| Sonali Das

Word of the day

Denigrate:
cause to seem less serious; play down; charge falsely or with malicious intent; attack the good name and reputation of someone

Synonyms: belittle, derogate, minimise, besmirch, defame, slander, smear, sully

Usage: *People are trying to denigrate the importance of a good education.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/denigratepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈdɛn.ɪ.ɡɹeɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

From Page One

Adani indicted in U.S. for bribery, fraud

In a statement, a spokesperson for the conglomerate said, "As stated by the U.S. Department of Justice itself, 'the charges in the indictment are allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.' All possible legal recourse will be sought. The Adani Group has always upheld and is steadfastly committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance, transparency and regulatory compliance across all jurisdictions of its operations."

What does the indictment say?

The indictment concerns the actions of the defendants between 2020 and 2024. The defendants are Mr. Gautam Adani; Mr. Sagar Adani, Executive Director of Adani Green Energy; Vneet S Jaain, former CEO of Adani Green Energy; Ranjit Gupta, former CEO of Azure Power Global; Mr. Cyril Cabanes, a former managing director at CDPQ, a Canadian pension fund which is also a majority stockholder of Azure Power; Saurabh Agarwal, former managing director of CDPQ India; Deepak Malhotra, former executive of CDPQ, and Rupesh Agarwal, former CEO of Azure Power.

Under the U.S.'s Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 1977 (FCPA), it is unlawful to make payments to foreign government officials in a bid to obtain or retain business. It is also a criminal offence to raise money by misleading investors about key corporate governance practices, which this case concerns compliance with the FCPA.

Further, it is unlawful to obstruct federal investigations by giving false information and destroying evidence such as electronic communications. It is also a separate offence to hide the authorisation of bribery practices in company annual reports. The defendants have been charged with offences on all these counts.

The indictment also charges the defendants with obstructing a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) probe by falsely denying their participation in the bribery scheme to FBI agents. Mr. Sagar Adani came to know of the FBI investigation, as well the people under the FBI scanner when, in March 2023, FBI agents in the U.S. served him a copy of a search warrant and took possession of his electronic devices.

The search warrant clearly "identified offences, individuals and entities under investigation" and mentioned the violations of the FCPA, securities fraud, wire fraud and related conspiracies involving Mr. Gautam Adani and Adani Green Energy. And yet, subsequently, Gautam and Sagar caused others to make false and misleading statements regarding their awareness and knowledge of the United States government's investigation and its subjects, which enabled them to raise a dollar-denominated syndicate loan of $1.36 billon for Adani Green.

According to the indictment, starting in 2020, the defendants authorised and collaborated on a scheme to pay over $250 million in bribes to Indian government officials in order to secure solar power purchase contracts for Adani Green Energy and Azure Power from Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a company of the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, whose mission is to increase use of renewable energy in India.

Unable to find buyers

The U.S. DoJ indictment has alleged that the Adanis resorted to a bribery scheme because the SECI was unable to find buyers among State distribution companies (discoms) for the Adanis' solar power, whose price was above market rates. But many State discoms did subsequently sign sale agreements with the SECI to buy the Adanis' more expensive renewable power.

The indictment notes that "following the promise of bribes to Indian government officials-...between July 2021 and February 2022, electricity distribution companies for the States and regions of Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh entered into PSAs [Power Sale Agreements) with the SECI".

Further, "Andhra Pradesh's electricity distribution companies entered into a PSA with the SECI on or about December 1, 2021 after which the State agreed to purchase approximately seven gigawatts of solar power, by far the largest amount of any Indian State or region."

CAQM submissions ignore paddy burnt area

The MoM and the data on increase in paddy area burnt have not yet been made available in the public domain by the CAQM.

The CAQM data shared with the Supreme Court show farm fires in Punjab and Haryana decreasing in 2023 by 26.5% and 37.09% over the 2022 figures.

Punjab government data, however, show that during the same period, the burnt area increased to 19.1 lakh hectares from 15.4 lakh hectares – an increase of 24%. Similarly, data for Punjab calculated by the Central government's Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) showed a 15.03% increase in burnt area from 21.03 lakh hectares to 24.2 lakh hectares.

While IARI data for Haryana is not available for 2022, the burnt area increased to 8.3 lakh hectares in 2023 from 3.5 lakh hectares in 2021, an increase of 137%. As per CAQM data for Haryana, farm fires fell by 67% in 2023 compared with 2021.

"The burnt area and fire counts cannot be this different and it shows that farmers are burning stubble when the satellite is not passing over the area. Even this year, those fields from which no fires were counted by the satellite were later found to be burnt," the source said.

Mahayuti and MVA pin hopes on increased voter turnout

Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis sees 'pro-incumbency' trend, voters' 'affinity' towards BJP-led govt.; Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut sounds confident of unseating ruling alliance

Abhinay Deshpande
MUMBAI

The rise in voter turnout on Wednesday for the Maharashtra Assembly election, compared with the 2019 figure, has been claimed as a sign of support by both the ruling Mahayuti alliance and the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), each interpreting it to its advantage. Votes will be counted on November 23.

Deputy Chief Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Devendra Fadnavis attributed the rise in turnout – provisionally recorded at 65% compared with 61.74% in 2019 – to a "pro-incumbency" trend and voters' "affinity" towards the BJP-led Mahayuti government. He expressed confidence that this trend would help the alliance retain power.

"The increased voting percentage in Maharashtra generally favours the BJP and our alliance partners. It reflects pro-incumbency and the sense of connection voters feel with the government," he said. The BJP leader also credited the participation of women voters to initiatives such as the Ladki Bahin scheme.

The Election Commission provisionally recorded voter turnout for the Maharashtra polls at 65% compared with 61.74% in 2019. ANI

On the other hand, the Opposition Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray or UBT) MP Sanjay Raut expressed optimism over the MVA's prospects, predicting a victory by winning 160-165 seats in the 288-member Assembly. "We and our allies, including smaller parties like the PWP (Peasants and Workers Party), Samajwadi Party (SP), and the Left, are crossing the majority mark. I am confident we will form a stable government," Mr. Raut said.

The BJP-led Mahayuti comprises the BJP, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), while the MVA includes Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena, the Congress, and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP).

While both alliances are eyeing control of the State, the Mahayuti is determined to retain power, and the MVA hopes to capitalise on the momentum of the 2024 Lok Sabha election and "change" narrative.

Exit polls have largely predicted a victory for the BJP-led alliance, although some have indicated a potential edge for the MVA.

When asked about the next Chief Minister, Mr. Fadnavis said the alliance partners would collectively decide on the leadership if the Mahayuti won the election.

When asked about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's demand for the arrest of industrialist Gautam Adani over bribery allegations in the U.S., the BJP leader dismissed it, saying, "Rahul Gandhi speaks every day, and there's nothing significant in it."

11 held for vandalism at polling booths in Maharashtra's Beed

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

A day after incidents of violence and intimidation marred the Assembly election in a few pockets of Maharashtra, the State police have taken action, arresting 11 persons for damaging an electronic voting machine and vandalising several polling stations in Beed district.

A polling booth was vandalised at Someshwar School in Agriculture Minister Dhananjay Munde's Parli constituency, and a Nationalist Congress Party (SP) worker, Madhav Jadhav from Ghatnandur, was attacked by unidentified individuals at Kanherwadi village.

"We went to stop the bogus voting of Mr. Munde's goons, but I was only attacked. Now police have arrested people, I hope they will be punished," Mr. Jadhav told *The Hindu*.

According to the police, a few officials were also attacked by the accused, who were carrying wooden sticks.

A vandalised polling booth in Ghatnandur village of Beed district on November 20. ANI

Several other booths were also vandalised in Ghatnandur village in Ambajogai Taluka, where police have registered a case against at least 35 people and arrested 11, according to the Beed Superintendent's office. "We arrested at least 11 people who vandalised and harmed the booths and EVM," a Beed official told *The Hindu*.

The accused were booked under Sections 109 (charges of attempt to murder), 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), and 132 (criminal force against a public servant) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and under sections of the Representation of the People Act.

Multiple locations raided in 5 districts of Jammu region

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Multiple locations were searched in five districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday in connection with a case relating to infiltration by terrorists from across the border and the recent attacks on security forces and civilians, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said.

Multiple NIA teams conducted extensive searches at eight locations in Reasi, Udhampur, Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar districts of the Union Territory.

"The searches led to the seizure of various materials showing linkages between terrorists of banned outfits with overground workers (OGWs) and hybrid terrorists whose premises were searched. Premises of sympathizers and cadres of these organisations were also searched as part of the crackdown," the NIA said.

Extensive searches at eight locations in Reasi, Udhampur, Doda, Ramban, and Kishtwar districts

The suspected hybrid terrorists and OGWs were linked with the newly-formed offshoots and affiliates of the banned terrorist outfits, it added.

The NIA had registered a case on October 24 based on information regarding the infiltration of active terrorists belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad into Indian territory through the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC).

"The infiltrations were facilitated by OGWs and other terror associates, based in villages in Jammu region," the NIA said.

Jharkhand records 67.74% turnout in election

Amit Bhelari
RANCHI

Sharing final figures of the second phase of polling in the Jharkhand Assembly election, Chief Electoral Officer K. Ravi Kumar said the second phase saw a voter turnout of 68.95%. Polling in 38 constituencies, comprising 14,218 booths, concluded peacefully on Wednesday with a higher turnout than the first phase.

"Turnout was 68.95% in the second phase. The voting percentage will increase further after the counting of postal ballots. Overall voting percentage in both phases was 67.74. Once again, in the second phase, women voters outnumbered men. Rural voters were ahead compared to those in urban areas," Mr. Kumar said while addressing the media at Nirvachan Sadan in Ranchi.

Kuki-Zo student bodies withdraw CRPF boycott call

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Kuki-Zo student bodies in Manipur withdrew their "non-cooperation" call against CRPF personnel on Thursday.

More than 200 companies, or about 20,000 personnel, of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) are deployed in the State in addition to Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

The student bodies had declared a non-cooperation movement against the CRPF after the November 11 incident in Jiribam district in which 10 armed militants were killed in firing by the Central forces.

Village volunteers

The tribal bodies said that those killed were village volunteers.

The armed men were killed in a retaliatory fire by CRPF personnel when they attacked a CRPF camp and the nearby Borobekra police station on November 11.

Six Meitei people – three women and three children – were allegedly abducted and killed by other armed militants who were part of the same group, while two others were burnt to death. The victims were living in a relief camp in proximity to the CRPF camp.

To protest the killings of the armed militants, Kuki-Zo bodies announced a boycott call against the CRPF in other districts.

A joint statement by various Kuki-Zo student bodies said that the the "Non-Cooperation movement against the CRPF has been withdrawn with immediate effect".

The decision comes after high-level discussions between the CRPF leadership and various student bodies, it said.

Opposition for extension of JPC tenure on Waqf Bill

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Opposition members of the Joint Committee on Waqf (Amendment) Bill sought an extension of the panel's tenure, after Chairman Jagdambika Pal announced that Thursday's sitting was its last and a draft report would be circulated soon.

Parliament had given the committee deadline till the first week of the Winter Session to submit its report.

The 19-day session begins on November 25.

Mr. Pal's announcement that Thursday's sitting was the last and that the Committee Secretariat would shortly be distributing the draft report, drew howls of protests from MPs. Opposition members raised slogans and there was a heated exchange of words between the two sides.

Sanjay Murthy assumes office as India's new CAG

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Senior Indian Administrative Service officer K. Sanjay Murthy on Thursday assumed office as the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

The 1989-batch IAS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre succeeds Girish Chandra Murmu, who demitted office on Wednesday.

Prior to this, Mr. Murthy was Secretary in the Department of Higher Education of the Education Ministry. He has also served as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, as Chief Executive Officer of National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation and as Joint Secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office and secrecy.

World should embrace Buddhist doctrines to resolve conflicts: Rajnath

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The world should embrace Buddhist doctrines to find solutions to the ongoing conflicts and challenges to the international order, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at a regional security conclave in Laos on Thursday.

India has always advocated and adopted dialogue-based solutions to resolving complex international issues and its approach to a wide range of international challenges from border disputes to trade agreements, he told an audience of his counterparts from a number of countries, including China's Defence Minister Dong Jun.

The Defence Minister made the remarks at the conclave of the 10-nation ASEAN grouping and some of its dialogue partners, held in Vientiane, the capital city of Laos.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun in Vientiane, Laos on Thursday. ANI

"With the world increasingly getting polarised into blocks and camps, leading to increasing strain on the established world order, it is time that the Buddhist doctrines of peaceful co-existence are embraced more closely by all," he said, adding than an open dialogue promotes sustainable relationships.

India, Australia firm up air-to-air refuelling deal

NEW DELHI

India and Australia have firmed up an arrangement to enable the air forces of the two countries to carry out air-to-air refuelling. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Australian counterpart Pat Conroy announced the deal in Vientiane on Thursday.

Top court suggests setting up courtroom in jail for Yasin Malik

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday orally suggested setting up a courtroom in jail in Delhi for Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik in the face of strong objection raised by the Central Bureau of Investigation to a Jammu court order allowing his physical presence in a criminal trial connected to the killing of four Air Force personnel in 1989.

Justice A.S. Oka said a fair trial was afforded to even 26/11 Mumbai attack terrorist Ajmal Kasab in response to Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submission that Mr. Malik was not "just another terrorist".

Mr. Mehta, for the Central agency, said: "We, that is the government, cannot go by the book in this case". He submitted that Mr. Malik was playing tricks with the courts.

APPEAL

Master Laksh Sachdeva son of Deepak Sachdeva 8 years admitted in Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre is a diagnosed case of Thalassemia Major. He is admitted for Allogenic Bone Marrow Transplant. The approximate cost of treatment at hospital is **Rs. 15,00,000/-.**

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A 'bribery scheme' to bag lucrative solar power deals

The indictment of Gautam Adani and his business associates by the U.S. Department of Justice details how the alleged bribery scheme was systematically piloted over time and across jurisdictions using 'Bribery Notes', in-person meetings, PowerPoint slides, and Excel analyses of different payment options; it also gives details of the multiple meetings among the 'co-conspirators'

G. Sampath
NEW DELHI

The indictment of industrialist Gautam Adani and his business associates by the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) presents detailed allegations regarding the processes followed by senior executives of Adani Green Energy Ltd. and Azure Power Global Ltd. (a renewable energy company headquartered in New Delhi, which used to be listed on the New York stock exchange) to bribe Indian government officials and secure lucrative solar power contracts.

The indictment starts by explaining the alleged motivation for resorting to a bribery scheme. Between December 2019 and July 2020, Azure Power and a subsidiary of Adani Green Energy won, and were issued, letters of award (LOAs) for a manufacturing-linked solar tender offered by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a company of the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy whose mission is to increase the use of renewable energy.

As part of this award, Azure Power and Adani Green's subsidiary would supply 4 GW and 8 GW of solar power, respectively, to the SECI, which would buy it at a fixed rate. The SECI, in turn, had to find State electricity distribution companies (discoms) that would purchase this 12 GW of solar power.

High prices

However, "the high energy prices" set out in the LOA made it impossible for the SECI to find buyers, thus jeopardising the "lucrative LOAs and corresponding revenue", notes the indictment.

As a result, "Gautam S. Adani, Sagar R. Adani [Mr. Gautam's nephew and executive director of Adani Green Energy], Vneet S. Jaain [former CEO of Adani Green Energy], Ranjit Gupta [former CEO of Azure Power Global]... among others, devised a scheme to offer, authorise, make and promise to make bribe payments to Indian government officials" in exchange for the State discoms to enter into PSAs (power sale agreements) with the SECI. The PSAs would then allow Adani Green and Azure Power to secure PPAs (power purchase agreements) with the SECI. It was agreed that Azure Power "would pay for a portion of the promised bribes".

The co-conspirators regularly discussed the progress of the plans on their mobile phones, using "an electronic messaging application". Mr. Gautam Adani "personally met with "Foreign Official #1 in Andhra Pradesh" in August, September, and November 2021.

The "co-conspirators" promised to Indian government officials around ₹2,029 crore ($265 million) of bribes. Of this, around ₹1,750 crore was offered to Andhra Pradesh's "Foreign Official #1".

Between July 2021 and February 2022, discoms "for the States and regions of Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh entered into PSAs with SECI".

Further, "Andhra Pradesh's electricity distribution companies entered into a PSA with SECI on or about December 1, 2021" after which the State agreed to "purchase approximately seven gigawatts of solar power, by far the largest amount of any Indian State or region".

With the PSAs done, between October 2021 and February 2022, Adani Green and Azure Power, through subsidiaries, executed PPAs with the SECI. It was agreed that Azure Power would supply 650 MW of solar power to the SECI for Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and J&K (hereafter "the 650 MW PPAs") and 2.3 GW for Andhra Pradesh (hereafter 2.3 GW PPAs). Likewise, Adani Green's subsidiaries also executed PPAs with the SECI covering the same States and regions.

Bribe notes

The indictment states that while this bribery scheme was unfolding, Mr. Sagar Adani was tracking on his mobile phone the "specific details of the bribes offered and promised to government officials". These "Bribe Notes" identified the State or region for which officials had been offered a bribe, the total amount of the offered bribe, and the amount of solar power the State or region would agree to purchase for a bribe.

"The Bribe Notes also identified the per megawatt rate for the total bribe amount offered, the abbreviated titles of the government officials who would receive the bribes, and/or the allocation of the total bribe amount among government officials" within each State or region.

The indictment details the multiple meetings between Mr. Gautam Adani, Mr. Vneet S. Jaain, and the "co-conspirators" to get Azure Power to pay its share of the bribe amount. "In anticipation of the meeting", it states, "Jaain used his cellular phone to photograph a document summarising the amounts" Azure Power owed Adani Green "for its respective portion of the bribes".

Apparently, Azure Power owed Adani Green ₹55 crore "for the bribes that were promised to secure the 650 MW PPAs" and ₹583 crore "for the bribes that were promised to secure the 2.3 GW PPAs".

In one such bribery coordination meeting, Mr. Gautam Adani allegedly "presented multiple options" by which Azure Power could conceal satisfaction of its portion of the bribe payments, including by transferring the 2.3 GW PPAs to Adani Green or its subsidiaries. To help the Azure Power management decide "which corrupt payment option was best", one of the alleged co-conspirators, Rupesh Agarwal, a former CEO of Azure Power, prepared "multiple analyses using PowerPoint and Excel".

The indictment alleges that the co-conspirators eventually agreed that Azure Power would return the 2.3 GW PPAs to the SECI, with the understanding that Adani Green or its subsidiary would acquire it for itself, "thereby satisfying a portion of" Azure Power's bribery obligations.

Azure Power also agreed to pay Adani Green "its portion – approximately $7 million – of the bribe payments promised [by Adani Green] to Indian government officials" to secure the 650 MW PPAs, which would facilitate Azure Power retaining the project.

Mr. Agarwal and other senior executives of Azure Power then obtained Board approval for returning the 2.3 GW PPAs to the SECI by obfuscating the true reasons for this move and citing "deteriorating economics". Around November 22, 2022, Azure Power's Board of Directors authorised sending a letter to the SECI about withdrawing from the 2.3 GW PPAs. On the same day, Mr. Sagar Adani allegedly sent an electronic message to Mr. Gautam Adani stating that there is a Board meeting "where they are expected to approve the final letter to be sent to SECI. We will keep close track and chase it up properly". Mr. Gautam Adani allegedly replied, "Ok".

The actual letter from Azure Power to the SECI was sent on December 7, 2022. On December 8, Mr. Sagar Adani sent an electronic message to Mr. Gautam Adani, stating that Azure Power "has finally submitted letter to SECI today...will follow for next steps closely". The indictment concludes from these exchanges that the Adanis "were secretly directing [Azure Power's] return of the 2.3 GW PPAs to SECI".

The alleged bribery scheme fructified finally on March 18, 2024, the day "SECI sent letters to [Azure Power] terminating the 2.3 GW PPAs, authorising reallocation of the 2.3 GW PPAs to [Adani Green's] subsidiary and affirming [Azure Power's] obligation to continue developing the 650 MW PPAs".

Elaborate plan

How the alleged bribery scheme unfolded

Dec. 2019-July 2020: The Solar Energy Corporation of India inks pact to buy 8 GW of solar power from Adani Green and 4 GW from Azure Power

- Under the agreement, SECI has to find State discoms that would buy the 12 GW of solar power

2020: High prices make it tough for SECI to find buyers

- Gautam Adani, along with nephew Sagar, Vneet S. Jaain and other officials, come up with a scheme to "offer, authorise, make and promise to make bribe payments to Indian government officials" to find buyers for SECI

Aug. to Nov. 2021: Gautam Adani meets Andhra Pradesh "official"

- "Co-conspirators" promise to Indian government officials around ₹2,029 cr. of bribes. Of this, around ₹1,750 cr. is offered to the official in Andhra Pradesh

July 2021 to Feb. 2022: Electricity firms in Odisha, J&K, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, and A.P. enter deals to buy power from SECI

April 2022: Gautam, Vneet, and Sagar meet Azure officials; Adanis present "multiple options" how Azure could repay Adani Green around ₹638 crore for its share of the bribes

June 2022: Some Azure executives and the Adanis finalise the mechanism to facilitate the payment by returning the power purchase agreements for 2.3 GW to SECI, which it would then award to Adani Green

March 2024: SECI allows reallocation of 2.3 GW of purchase deals from Azure Power to Adani Green's unit

Gautam Adani

Sagar Adani

Vneet S. Jaain

T.N. has no commercial link with Adani Group firms, says Minister

The Hindu Bureau
KARUR

Tamil Nadu Electricity Minister V. Senthilbalaji on Thursday said that there was no commercial link between the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) and the Adani Group companies in any manner.

Reacting to the reports on the indictment of industrialist Gautam Adani and seven others in a U.S. court on charges of fraud and bribery, Mr. Senthilbalaji said that he had read social media posts about the allegations against Mr. Adani.

"I make it clear that as far as the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board was concerned, there was no commercial link with the Adani group of firms over the last three years. There was no link whatsoever with the Adani Group in any manner," he insisted.

V. Senthilbalaji

Mr. Senthilbalaji said the State government had entered into memorandums of understanding with companies which were under the control of the Department of Energy of the Union government, to procure electricity.

The MoU with Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd. (SECI) was among the MoUs with Union government-owned firms.

The SECI had entered into MoUs with firms producing electricity so as to supply power to the States. Depending upon the demands from various States, it was supplying electricity. Tamil Nadu had entered into an agreement with the SECI to purchase 1,500 MW of power. The procurement price was ₹2.61 a unit, which was very low. The State, during the AIADMK regime, paid ₹7 a unit, he said.

The issue of linking Adani with Tangedco pertains to its proposal to purchase 500 MW of solar power through the SECI for which the discom had given a power purchase agreement petition to the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC) on October 10, 2023.

The proposed purchase was to fulfil the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) of the State government. The TNERC had passed an order regarding this petition on May 7, 2024, in which it approved the purchase of 500 MW: 200 MW at a tentative cost of ₹2.72 per kilowatt hour and 300 MW at ₹2.73 per kilowatt hour.

In the petition, Tangedco stated that the shortfall would range from 2,177 MW for the financial year 2022-23 to 12,957 MW in 2029-30.

Tangedco had agreed to purchase the solar power through SECI to avoid being penalised by the Ministry of Power for 'non-compliance' of RPO.

(With inputs from R. Srikanth in Chennai)

Former A.P. CM accused of taking ₹1,750 cr. for power purchase deal

Appaji Reddem
AMARAVATI

The Power Supply Agreements (PSAs) by Andhra Pradesh's electricity distribution companies are under the scanner in the $265-million bribery case unearthed by the United States.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) indictment has accused Adani Group of bribing the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and other officials. Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was the CM during the period.

Andhra Pradesh had agreed to buy 7 gigawatts of solar power. In August 2021, Gautam Adani had met with the then CM of Andhra Pradesh, about the fact that the State had not entered into a Power Supply Agreement with the SECI and the "incentives" needed to encourage Andhra Pradesh to do so, stated the SEC.

Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

"Sagar Adani had a subsequent meeting with the Chief Minister on September 12, 2021. Post these meetings, the Adanis (Gautam and Sagar) paid or promised a bribe to Andhra Pradesh government officials to make the relevant Andhra Pradesh government entities enter into PSAs with the SECI for the purchase of 7,000 MW of power capacity. Adani Green's records and later statements by Adani Green executives to the Azure Chairman indicated that the Andhra Pradesh bribe payment was approximately $200 million (₹1,750 crore). Shortly after these meetings, Andhra Pradesh agreed in principle to execute a PSA with the SECI that would directly benefit Adani Green and Azure," the SEC stated. Within a few weeks, the government was quoted as saying, "In the Cabinet meeting held last month, it was decided to accept SECI's offer. After deliberation, the State decided to tap 7,000 MW in the first phase."

The YSR Congress Party central office, Tadepalli, Guntur, through a release, denied the allegations. It stated that the Andhra Pradesh government received an offer from SECI to supply 7,000 MW of power at the lowest discovered tariff of ₹2.49 per kWh.

The statement said that the power procurement was approved by the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission through its order dated November 11, 2021. Then, an agreement was signed between SECI and A.P. Discoms. This was after the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission's nod as well. "It is necessary to mention that SECI is a Government of India enterprise. There is no direct agreement between AP DISCOMs and any other entities including those belonging to the Adani Group," it said.

Adani will not be arrested in India because Modi is protecting him, says Rahul

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Thursday demanded the immediate arrest of Gautam Adani after the billionaire industrialist was charged in the U.S. for alleged bribery and fraud. He accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of protecting Mr. Adani and also demanded removal of SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch.

"American investigations have found him culpable in a ₹2,000 crore scam. He should be arrested immediately. Madhabi Buch who has been protecting Mr. Adani should be arrested too," Mr. Gandhi said at a press conference.

Rahul Gandhi

He said he is very confident that the government will not take any action against Mr. Adani. "I can guarantee that Adani won't be arrested or investigated in India because the Modi government is protecting him," Mr. Gandhi said.

Taking a jibe at Mr. Modi's "*ek hain to safe hain* (together we are safe)" slogan, Mr. Gandhi said as long as the Prime Minister and Gautam Adani are together, "they are safe" in India.

Asked about some States ruled by non-BJP parties being named by the U.S. prosecutors, he said: "Wherever this has happened, be it any government, there should be an investigation. But the one involved in the corruption should be jailed. The investigations have to begin with Mr. Adani's arrest. Arrest Mr. Adani, interrogate him, and arrest all those who were involved with him. You will find that the Prime Minister's name too will crop up in the investigation. Because BJP's funding structure is in Mr. Adani's hand which is why even if the PM wanted, he cannot do anything. India is currently under Mr. Adani's grip," Mr. Gandhi said.

BJP dares Congress to approach court on the charges involving Adani Group entity in U.S.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday said the Congress should approach the court with the charges involving an Adani Group company instead of only raising the issue in the media, pointing out that none of the four Indian States mentioned in the U.S. court document had a BJP government during the time period in question.

On the allegations, BJP MP and spokesperson Sambit Patra said it was for the private company to issue a response in its defence, and that the law would take its own course.

"Documents are in the public domain... the issue pertains to electricity sale-purchase agreements and agreements with State Distribution Companies (SDCs) and the relevant time period is from July 2021 to February 2022. India's four States have been named in U.S. court. At that time, Congress's Bhupesh Baghel's government was in Chhattisgarh, there was YSRCP rule in Andhra Pradesh, the DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) government was in Tamil Nadu, and Biju Janata Dal was in power in Odisha," Mr. Patra said.

> Your [Congress] entire structure involving the likes of George Soros and Ilhan Omar wants to keep damaging Indian markets
>
> **SAMBIT PATRA**
> BJP MP and spokesperson

"Rahul Gandhi said he has no objection to any of his former Chief Ministers or leaders being interrogated. Then let Bhupesh Baghel be interrogated. The Ministers under whom the Electricity Department fell in the respective States should also be questioned. Why would we have any objections?" he said.

He accused Mr. Gandhi and the Congress of continuously attempting to damage Indian markets. "Your entire structure involving the likes of George Soros and Ilhan Omar (American representative) wants to keep damaging Indian markets. You cannot tolerate the fact that the Indian economy is racing towards the third position in the world," Mr. Patra alleged.

"Since 4 a.m. today, the entire structure is alive on social media, sending 'signals' even to the international markets. The consequence is that about 2.5 crore small investors lost their hard-earned money," the BJP leader said.

"Mr. Gandhi today said that PM was behind Mr. Adani. In that case, why did the Congress's Bhupesh Baghel government in Chhattisgarh accept ₹25,000-crore investment from an Adani company? In Rajasthan, in the Ashok Gehlot government, ₹65,000-crore investment by an Adani company was allowed – why? In Karnataka, where the Congress is still in power, ₹1 lakh-crore investment was promised; we don't know right now as to how much of it was done," he said.

Mr. Patra said that in West Bengal, an investment of ₹35,000 crore had been made by the same group. In Andhra Pradesh, the figure was ₹60,000 crore, and it was ₹4,500 crore in Tamil Nadu. "On October 19, 2024, Adani Foundation donated ₹100 crore for skill upliftment in Telangana, ruled by the Congress government. Why did you take that donation from a 'corrupt' person?" he said, adding that in January 2024, the Telangana government had signed an estimated ₹12,400-crore MoU with Adani Group companies.

"Be it the 2G case, Commonwealth Games case, or the coal scam – on all these issues, the BJP went to court. You should also do the same. And, you [Mr. Gandhi] said the Congress has to do the judiciary's work as well. There should be *suo motu* cognisance for contempt on such a remark," Mr. Patra said.

INBRIEF

'No mention of wrongdoing by SECI in Adani case'

The Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), the nodal agency for the implementation of renewable projects in India, has not been mentioned for any wrongdoing in the Adani case, its chairman and managing director (CMD) R.P. Gupta (in picture) said on Thursday. Billionaire Gautam Adani has been charged by U.S. prosecutors for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay $265 million bribe to Indian officials in exchange of favourable terms for solar power contracts. "There is nothing against SECI. It has done nothing wrong. That is no where. There is no mention of any wrongdoing or irregularity on part of SECI," he said. PTI

Farooq Abdullah asks Centre to probe Adani's indictment

With the Union Territory's J&K Power Corporation Limited among companies listed in the U.S. Department of Justice's five-count criminal indictment of billionaire Gautam Adani, National Conference (NC) president Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Thursday demanded a probe into it. Asking the Centre to take these allegations "seriously", the former J&K Chief Minister said, "If it has happened, it needs to be investigated. There is a demand for a JPC (Joint Parliamentary Committee). I hope the Centre will take it seriously and investigate into what has happened and the causes. It's a serious issue and the Centre should look into it."

Sri Lanka 'should be vigilant' about Adani power deal, caution experts

President Dissanayake's govt. had earlier said it would revisit deal after the parliamentary polls; apart from opposition to its 'backdoor entry' in the absence of an open call for tenders, the project has also received flak from environmentalists

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka should be vigilant about the Adani power project on the island, experts said on Thursday, after Federal prosecutors in New York indicted Group chairman Gautam Adani and seven others on multiple counts of fraud.

Sri Lanka has often seen cases of significant corruption in the country being exposed in other jurisdictions, according to Nishan De Mel, executive director of Verité Research, a Colombo-based think tank.

He referred to the allegations of bribery in Sri Lankan Airlines's purchase of aircraft from Airbus, which surfaced in a United Kingdom-based investigation a few years ago, and to the Pandora Papers that threw up names of local politicians and businessmen. "It is very important for Sri Lanka to redouble its efforts against corruption, to ensure that we are protected from corrupt deals," he told *The Hindu*.

After news on the alleged bribery scheme of the Adani Group surfaced on Thursday, many citizens and activists in Sri Lanka took to social media and called for greater scrutiny of the Group's power project on the island. President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who won the presidency in September, and his National People's Power (NPP) alliance, which secured a historic two-thirds majority in the November 14 general election, have pledged to root out corruption. Days before his election win, Mr. Dissanayake vowed to cancel the "corrupt Adani deal" if his government came to power. Subsequently, Foreign Minister and Cabinet spokesperson of the interim administration said the government would "review" the project after the parliamentary polls.

Former President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Gautam Adani during a meeting in New Delhi in July 2023. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Controversial deal

Adani Green Energy is investing $442 million in a wind power project in Mannar and Pooneryn in northern Sri Lanka. From the time the former Gotabaya Rajapaksa government roped in the firm in 2022, the project has remained controversial. The main political opposition accused the conglomerate of "backdoor entry", in the absence of an open call for tenders. The same year, a top Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) official told a Parliamentary panel that the project was given to the Adani Group after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi "pressured" President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The official subsequently resigned, after withdrawing his original statement.

Regardless, the Ranil Wickremesinghe administration went ahead with the project. When the Adani Group came under the global spotlight in early 2023, and its stocks plummeted in the wake of U.S. short seller Hindenburg accusing it of pulling the "largest con in corporate history", then Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka Ali Sabry said the Wickremesinghe administration was "very, very confident" of the future of the project, which it saw as a "government-to-government" deal with India.

Earlier this year, environmentalists and Mannar residents moved Sri Lanka's Supreme Court, challenging the project on grounds of potential environmental impact and "lack of transparency". The case was taken up by a five-member Bench and the next hearing is scheduled for March 18 and 19, 2025, according to sources.

The U.S. indictment of the firm now "bolsters" the NPP's argument for reviewing the project in Sri Lanka, noted Shihar Aneez, a consultant editor with the Colombo-based news portal *Economynext*.

"Right from the beginning there has been ambiguity over whether the Adani project is a government-to-government deal with India, or a private sector investment," the financial journalist said.

The credibility of Adani projects has come into question not just in the U.S., but also in the region, he noted, pointing to the Bangladesh High Court recently ordering a high-level probe to re-examine the country's power purchase agreement with the Group. Going forward, the Dissanayake government must revisit the project with an open tender process, Mr. Aneez said, adding, "If Adani Green wins the bid through that process, then they are welcome... The Sri Lankan government has greater bargaining power now."

Kenya cancels proposed deals with Adani group

Associated Press
NAIROBI

Kenya's president said on Thursday that he has cancelled multimillion-dollar airport expansion and energy deals with industrialist Gautam Adani after U.S. bribery and fraud indictments against him.

President William Ruto, in a state of the nation address, said the decision was made "based on new information provided by our investigative agencies and partner nations".

The Adani group had been in the process of signing an agreement that would modernise Kenya's main airport in the capital, Nairobi, with an additional runway and terminal constructed, in exchange for the group running the airport for 30 years.

The deal had sparked anti-Adani protests in Kenya and a strike by airport workers, who said it would lead to degraded working conditions and job losses.

The Adani group had also been awarded a deal to construct power transmission lines in Kenya. Energy Minister Opiyo Wandayi told a parliamentary committee there had been no bribery or corruption involved on Kenya's part in signing that deal.

After U.S. indictment, conglomerate will face greater pressure in Bangladesh over power deal, says expert

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Indictment of Gautam Adani and several top officials of the Adani conglomerate in the U.S. may become a factor in future negotiations between the Adani Group and the interim government in Bangladesh, energy experts in Dhaka have said. The criminal proceedings against Mr. Adani came a day after the High Court in Dhaka ordered a probe into the 1,600-megawatt power deal that allowed the Adani Group to export electricity from its Godda power plant to Bangladesh.

"The energy agreement between Adani and Sheikh Hasina government was controversial from the beginning as this contract, like many other energy contracts of Hasina years, was not done through tendering. Despite that the interim government had taken a positive approach and tried to continue dialogue. But after the U.S. indictment, that space of dialogue may shrink as the group is likely to face greater pressure from Bangladesh to compromise on pricing," said Ijaz Hossein, former Professor of the Bangladesh Institute of Engineering and Technology.

The Ministry of External Affairs did not comment on the ongoing uncertainty over Adani Power in Bangladesh. Officials pointed out, however, that India had continued to supply electricity under the G2G agreements, and would not intervene unless required in the arrangements with a "private" company.

Adani Power Ltd. (APL), a part of the Adani conglomerate, had started supplying power from the first 800-MW ultra-super critical thermal power generation unit in Jharkhand in April 2023. The ambitious project aimed to cater to the growing energy market of Bangladesh, which had become an attractive destination of international energy majors. Dr. Hossein pointed out that Adani offered a deal that appeared interesting in the beginning as it promised to bring coal from Australia and Indonesia to meet Bangladeshi demand. Bangladesh lacked a deep sea port to handle large coal shipments and Adani's offer made sense. "However, critics here had started saying that Adani, which apparently received government subsidy in India, did not transfer that benefit to Bangladesh," Dr. Hossein said.

The latest order by the court for a high-level probe into the deal will give Dhaka an opportunity to review its energy pact. REUTERS

The project's pricing was an issue even during Ms. Hasina's tenure though it is believed that the matter was handled to Adani's advantage because of better political relations between India and Bangladesh. In 2023, Bangladesh Power Development Board had written to Adani Power seeking revision of the price. Adani had quoted $400 per tonne, but BPDB argued it should be less than $250 a tonne as that was the price they had paid for other coal-fired power plants.

Adani's 2017 power deal with Bangladesh faced a major challenge with the fall of the Hasina government on August 5. With the fall of the Awami League government, several energy projects, especially coal power plants came under scrutiny. A special committee under the leadership of noted economist Debopriyo Bhattacharya had started scrutinising all power agreements under Hasina government that included the deal with Adani.

Despite negative public sentiment, the interim government under Mohammad Yunus, however, maintained dialogue with Adani Power, which had at a point threatened to suspend power supply over unpaid dues.

The interim government subsequently promised to process ₹1,450 crore allowing continued supply to Bangladesh. The latest move by the High Court ordering a high-level probe into the deal has come as a twist in the plot as it will give Dhaka another opportunity to relook at the entire energy deal.

CPI(M) seeks CBI inquiry into Adani bribery allegations

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) must be directed to immediately file a case based on the material provided by the prosecution in the United States against industrialist Gautam Adani for allegedly bribing public servants in India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) said on Thursday.

"It is shameful that such large-scale bribery and suborning of government officials by the Adanis had to be exposed not in India but in the United States through their criminal justice system," the CPI(M) said in a statement, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of protecting the industrialist. "Prime Minister Modi himself had shielded Adani from any enquiry or prosecution on the charges emanating from the Hindenburg expose," it added.

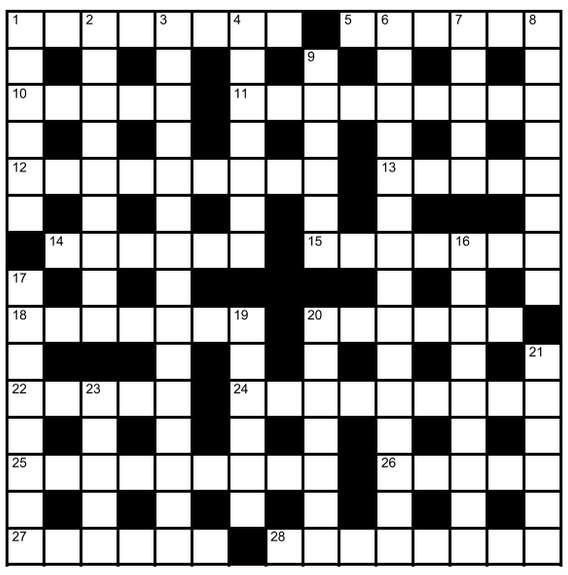
CPI general secretary D. Raja said that the indictment calls into question not just the personal integrity of Mr. Adani and his business empire but also the integrity of Indian watchdogs and the administration under which such unethical practices are flourishing. "From favourable policies to high-profile infrastructure deals, there is widespread public perception of the complicity of Prime Minister Modi. Repeated calls for investigation of all allegations – whether linked to bribery, stock manipulation, or regulatory failures – have fallen on the deaf ears of the Modi government. Only through a fair, unbiased probe can the truth be uncovered," he said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14337

(set by Dr. X)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Four cavorting around beauty on vacation (8)
5 Posh project by director in hilly country (6)
10 Shot around hideout in American city (5)
11 Trusts lead character in Agatha Christie's novel (9)
12 Slim girl drinking liquor with member is buzzing (9)
13 Vibrating sound of insect revolving around entrance to warehouse (5)
14 Time unfaithful fellow's dumped, please (6)
15 Crushed by grenade, his ceiling burst open (7)
18 Plants with resin found in sanctuaries (7)
20 Interrupts copper beginning to tackle crime (4,2)
22 Learning about sportsman finally breaking record (5)
24 Badly hit after wife became very angry (5,1,3)
25 Cautiously popped a drug with partner (9)
26 Restrain German breaking rule (5)
27 Beautiful maidens and national politician involved in fling in retreat (6)
28 Sad indeed, but no - book's not ready for publication (8)

Down

1 English novelist travelling to Bern (6)
2 Subordinate is close to cracking after endless stress (9)
3 Stop tickling my body - that's ridiculous! (4,4,2,5)
4 Entertain and seduce stunner finally for date (7)
6 Naughtily pet hot women at dinner party (5,3,4,3)
7 Mania changes inner personality (5)
8 Decline to enter disastrous Eastern conflict (8)
9 Gained two grand after end of tombola in base (6)
16 Miser's wickedness crushing family - getting extremely fretful and tense (9)
17 Complete information about heartless emir, one provoking a reaction (8)
19 Small kitchen utensil without lid in sink (6)
20 Continue to cheat around, pester husband to leave (5,2)
21 High from just one drink (6)
23 Killing duke, hope to seize large province (5)

SUDOKU

3			7		4	6		
	1	6		8	5			
2								
	2	7		9				3
	3						7	
5				6		1	8	
								1
			1	2		7	6	
		3	5		6			9

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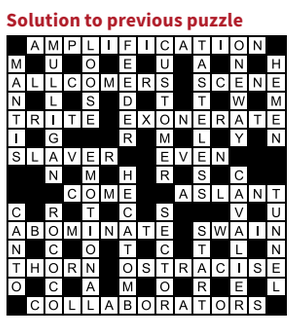
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	7	5	6	8	9	1	3	4
6	1	9	3	2	4	8	5	7
3	8	4	1	5	7	6	2	9
9	6	3	8	7	2	5	4	1
1	5	8	4	9	3	7	6	2
7	4	2	5	1	6	9	8	3
4	9	7	2	6	5	3	1	8
8	3	6	7	4	1	2	9	5
5	2	1	9	3	8	4	7	6

FAITH

Ways to handle criticism

Tolerance and introspection (assessing one's own failings) are the hallmark of a true devotee. When someone abuses one verbally, one should not retaliate. Instead, one should shrug off the criticisms with the belief that God will take care of everything, said Tirukkudanthai Dr. Venkatesh.

Running down another person is not a new trend caused by social media explosion, but in fact an integral part of human nature. Centuries ago, Pillai Lokacharya laid down five principles on how to handle criticism. Born in the 13th century, he and his brother Azhagiya Manavala Perumal Nayanar were erudite scholars, ardent devotees of Lord Ranganantha. Pillai Lokacharya produced 18 treatises. Of these, Tatva Trayam, the Mumukshuppadi and Sri Vachana Bhusanam are considered very erudite and important.

In Sri Vachana Bhushanam, a work on the sayings of the Azhwars and Acharyas, explaining the nature of God, the self, bhakti and *prapatti* (surrender), Pillai Lokacharya elaborates on the five-pronged approach to handle criticism. He says, "*Kutrram ceytavarkalpakkal poraiyum krupaiyum cirippum ukappum upakara smrutiyum natakkal venum*." First, show patience; second, show mercy to the criticiser, since the poor man could end up being punished by God for his treatment of you; third, smile sardonically because you know he is only throwing abuses at your physical body, and not on your *atma*; Fourth, be happy, for this body is only temporary and *jivatma* will attain *paramatma* and render service to Him. Finally, thank the abuser for he has done you a service: his criticism will impel one to introspect on one's faults.

INBRIEF

SEBI nixes 1% security deposit mandate in public issues

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday abolished the requirement of a mandatory security deposit with the exchanges before a public issue, in a bid to facilitate ease of doing business for issuer companies. The move will be applicable with immediate effect, SEBI said in a circular. Before this, any company that is looking to launch a public issue of equity shares has to deposit with the stock exchanges an amount equal to 1% of the issue size. PTI

NTPC Green Energy IPO gets subscribed 93% on Day 2

The initial public offer of NTPC Green Energy Ltd., the renewable energy arm of NTPC, got subscribed 93% on Thursday, the second day of bidding. The share sale received bids for 54,96,35,370 shares against 59,31,67,575 shares on offer, as per NSE data. The category for retail individual investors (RIIs) attracted 2.38 times subscription while qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) got subscribed 75%. Non-institutional investors received 34% subscription. PTI

ACC, NLC, others bag 5 coal mines in 10th round of auction

NLC India Ltd., ACC Ltd., and JSW Energy Utkal Ltd. are among the five companies that bagged five mines on the first day of the tenth round of the commercial coal mine auction, according to an official statement issued on Thursday. While ACC Ltd. bagged a coal mine in Madhya Pradesh, NLC India Ltd. and JSW Energy Utkal Ltd. won one block each in Odisha. A total of nine blocks had been put on sale in the tenth round of the coal mine auction. PTI

Adani stocks dive, drag Nifty to fresh five-month low

Tuesday's reprieve for Dalal Street when the Nifty-50 snapped its worst streak in 20 months, was short-lived, as an U.S. Court indicts the Adani group on bribery and securities fraud charges

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Indian stock markets slipped back into the red on Thursday, with the BSE Sensex sliding 0.54% to 77,155.79 points and the broader Nifty-50 hitting a fresh five-month low, after bribery and securities fraud charges figured in a U.S. Court indictment against Adani group promoter Gautam Adani and others.

The group's flagship company Adani Enterprises crashed 23.4% closing at ₹2160 a share. Adani Green Energy, the company named in the New York Eastern district court indictment that was unsealed on November 20, indictment fell 18.95% to ₹1145 a share.

Adani Total Gas dipped 10.4% to ₹602 per share, while Adani Energy Solutions fell 20% and closed at ₹697.25 apiece on the National Stock Exchange. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zones plummeted 13.23% to nearly ₹1,119 per stock, and Adani Power Limited stocks fell 9.62% to ₹473 apiece.

The apples to airports conglomerate's consumer goods stock Adani Wilmar also took a beating closing around ₹295 a share, 10% below the previous trading session. The stocks of cement companies acquired by the Adani group, including ACC and Ambuja cements, also felt the pain. ACC Ltd fell 8% closing at ₹2011 and Ambuja Cements Ltd at ₹480 , 12.6% below the previous close.

The Nifty-50 fell 0.72% to close at 23,349.9 points, with SBI Life Insurance (-3.15%) and State Bank of India (-2.75%) hit the most after the Adani group flagship and its ports entity.

"Indian stock indices experienced a significant decline today, pressured by bribery charges against Gautam Adani, which further weakened already fragile investor sentiment amid unfavourable global conditions," remarked Devarsh Vakil, HDFC Securities' deputy head of retail research, on the broad-based meltdown.

Tragic Thursday

Adani Group stocks tumbled sharply with flagship firm Adani Enterprises dropping the hardest

Company	Stock price dip
Adani Enterprises	23.44%
Adani Energy Solution	20%
Adani Green	18.95%
Adani Ports and SEZs	13.23%
Ambuja Cements	12.66%
Adani Total Gas	10.38%
Adani Wilmar	10%
Adani Power	9.62%
ACC Cements	7.99%

Source : NSE

Rupee falls 8 paise to all-time low of 84.50 against U.S. dollar

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 8 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.50 against the U.S. dollar on Thursday, dragged down by massive sell-off in domestic equity markets and surging crude oil prices amid a volatile geopolitical situation.

According to forex traders, the continuous outflow of foreign funds also put pressure on the domestic unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.41 and touched the lowest-ever level of 84.51 against the greenback during intra-day trading.

The rupee ended the session at 84.50 against the dollar. On Tuesday, the rupee had settled flat at 84.42 against the U.S. dollar.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	77,156	-0.54
US Dollar	84.50	-0.09
Gold	79,300	1.79
Brent oil	73.85	—

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2183.65	-637.85
Adani Ports	1114.65	-175.00
Apollo Hosp	6742.50	55.60
Asian Paints	2428.15	-55.55
Axis Bank	1139.15	5.20
Bajaj Auto	9505.00	-40.70
Bajaj Finserv	1569.25	-27.10
Bajaj Finance	6465.65	-129.65
Bharat Elec	275.45	-3.55
Bharti Airtel	1525.15	-0.35
BPCL	282.40	-5.10
Britannia Ind	4803.35	-89.35
Cipla	1465.50	-6.05
Coal India	406.00	-6.25
Dr Reddys Lab	1195.35	-18.10
Eicher Motors	4882.10	-83.35
Grasim Ind	2534.85	26.70
HCL Tech	1836.35	15.80
HDFC Bank	1741.20	-1.05
HDFC Life	674.40	-6.00
Hero MotoCorp	4767.85	-7.95
Hindalco	648.05	8.05
Hind Unilever	2382.80	-27.55
ICICI Bank	1250.55	1.45
IndusInd Bank	981.45	-18.75
Infosys	1834.05	9.30
ITC	457.15	-10.20
JSW Steel	944.15	-3.15
Kotak Bank	1737.10	9.35
L&T	3483.50	-22.40
M&M	2936.25	-12.70
Maruti Suzuki	10861.45	-97.85
NestleIndia	2211.20	-2.95
NTPC	356.15	-10.55
ONGC	242.15	-5.85
PowerGrid Corp	325.90	10.85
Reliance Ind	1223.00	-18.65
SBI Life	1477.95	-44.95
State Bank	780.75	-22.25
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2802.20	-22.55
Sun Pharma	1780.00	2.75
TataConsumerProduct	911.70	-5.45
Tata Motors	773.85	-9.35
Tata Steel	140.22	0.76
TCS	4072.85	33.30
Tech Mahindra	1702.25	2.60
Titan	3178.45	-46.25
Trent Ltd.	6460.45	36.60
UltraTech Cement	10954.85	185.30
Wipro	557.15	-4.85

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on November 21

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.29	84.61
Euro	88.65	88.99
British Pound	106.49	106.91
Japanese Yen (100)	54.60	54.81
Chinese Yuan	11.64	11.69
Swiss Franc	95.37	95.73
Singapore Dollar	62.69	62.94
Canadian Dollar	60.33	60.58
Malaysian Ringitt	18.87	18.97

Source:Indian Bank

Price stability bedrock for sustained growth: Das

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said price stability acts as a bedrock for sustained growth, and the central bank's endeavour is to bring down retail inflation to 4% on a durable basis.

Speaking on 'Balancing Inflation and Growth: The Cardinal Principle of Monetary Policy', he said resilient growth has given the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) the space to focus on inflation to ensure its durable descent to the 4% target.

Shaktikanta Das

"A stable inflation or price stability is in the best interest of people and the economy. It acts as a bedrock for sustained growth, enhances the purchasing power of people and provides a stable environment for investment," he said. He was addressing a high-level policy conference of central banks from the Global South here. The Governor said when the RBI took a pause on the policy rate in April 2023 after raising it by 250 basis points, it was important to anchor market expectations from running ahead or front running the central bank. It was, therefore, emphasised that it was a pause and not a pivot. This was to ensure that past rate actions were transmitted fully to the broader economy, he said.

The focus was on anchoring inflation expectations by emphasising our firm commitment to realign inflation with the target, he said. "We also categorically said that it is not enough to be within the tolerance band and that our job is not finished until we reach the target of 4% on a durable basis," the Governor added.

Mr. Das further said that while the global economy has managed to hold its ground in the highly stormy weather of the last few years, there are clouds of uncertainties that still loom on the horizon.

CEA Nageswaran asks India Inc. not to seek protective cover of weak currency

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran on Thursday advised Indian industry not to seek protective cover of weak currency as it is not a substitute for productivity and investment in research and development.

A weak currency can be good for exporters, making their products relatively less expensive for buyers abroad. Mr. Nageswaran further said the reliance on weak currency should not be instrumental to boosting exports, "if anything, it should be part of the policy arsenal to be deployed contextually, but not as a substitute for productivity, investment in R&D and quality, but as a complement at best".

Anantha Nageswaran

"We should not be thinking about in terms of the transformation of competitiveness, which is to continuously expect the weak currency to bail us," he said at an event organised by the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID).

Noting that China relied on weaker currency but it was guided by domestic productivity leaps in the first decade and also in the last decade of the new millennium. "In many other developing countries, including India, weak exchange rate actually has become a protective cover for lack of productivity. "It was used to hide our inefficiencies. That should not be the case," he said.

He pointed out that China's exchange rate policy accentuated the competitiveness that its domestic productivity gains were already conferring on its exports.

"But, we usually in the past has tended to shield, take cover behind the weaker exchange rate," the CEA said, adding that it should not continue.

Mr. Nageswaran said many countries now focusing on exchange rates as a tool of industrial policy, so there will be reactions and counter-reactions.

Observing that the world has already entered the era of de-globalisation, he said, "The reliance on global GDP growth and global export growth, driving our export growth... is not going to happen".

So, it is important for corporates to invest in human capital, he said.

While noting that the annual average economic growth of India between 2013-14 to 2023-24 was 5.9%, he said, "Industrial transition is necessary for us to get back to high growth rate".

Telecom surprise: BSNL gains, private telcos lose one crore subscribers this September

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Private telcos Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea cumulatively lost over one crore wireless subscribers in September, even as state-owned BSNL surprised with net adds of almost 8.5 lakh mobile users, as per monthly data released by TRAI.

Reliance Jio lost 79.69 lakh mobile subscribers in September compared to the previous month, Bharti Airtel (14.34 lakh users), and Vodafone Idea (15.53 lakh users).

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) added 8.49 lakh users to its wireless subscriber tally.

The wireless subscriber base of Reliance Jio stood at 46.37 crore in September, while that of Bharti Airtel was 38.34 crore.

The wireless user base of Vodafone Idea was 21.24 crore as of September 2024. BSNL's gains in September pushed its subscriber tally to 9.18 crore.

It is pertinent to mention that the three private telcos had hiked mobile tariffs by 10-27% in July.

'No tariff rise'

BSNL, however, refrained from following in the footsteps of its larger rivals, and its Chairman and Managing Director Robert Ravi recently ruled out an increase in tariffs, in the near future.

"We can clearly say we are not going to increase our tariffs in the near future," Mr. Ravi had told reporters in October.

Natco submits ANDA for Risdiplam for Oral Solution

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Natco Pharma has submitted abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) for Risdiplam for Oral Solution, a generic version of Genentech Inc's spinal muscular atrophy drug Evrysdi.

Natco said it believes it is among one of the first two companies to have filed a substantially-complete ANDA containing a paragraph IV certification for the product, and thus expects to be eligible for 180 days of shared marketing exclusivity at the time of potential launch of the generic product under certain circumstances.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No.	Material Description	Due Date
242513 004559	Bed Evaporator Tube Studded - Boiler #6	04.12.24
242523 002855	Design, Manufacturing, Testing and Supply of 11kV Switch gears for TM#5 in TNPL Unit-1.	16.12.24
E-mail	242513004559 - purchase.enggspares@tnpl.co.in 242523002855 - pmd1@tnpl.co.in	

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. Detailed Terms & conditions are available in tender document at our websites: **www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app**
DIPR/5063/Tender/2024 *TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper*

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CIN: U40109WB2007SGC113473, www.wbsedcl.in
Request for Proposals
e-Tender-cum-e-Reverse Auction No.: **WBSEDCL/PT&P/e-NIT/05/2024**, **Date: 22.11.2024** is invited by the **Chief Engineer (PT&P)**, **WBSEDCL**, Vidyut Bhavan, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700091, for purchase of power on Short-Term basis for the periods from **01.04.2025** to **30.06.2025** and from **01.04.2026** to **30.06.2026** through Traders/Licensees/Bidders. Interested parties may download the tender documents from the website **https://www.mstcecommerce.com** directly with the help of DSC from **11:00 hrs.** of **22.11.2024** and submit the same on or before **17:00 hrs.** of **28.11.2024**.
For details, visit **www.wbsedcl.in** ICA- T20885(3)/2024

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LTD.
NOTICE INVITING BIDS No. 12 & 13 (2024-25)
RVPN invites competitive BIDS for following Civil works from experienced, reputed contractors registered in appropriate class with RRVPNL & A or AA class in Central/ State Government Department and their undertakings and registered in GST department. The Tender/bid shall only be submitted through online tendering system of **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**. The interested bidders shall have to be enrolled/ registered with portal of **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** for participating in the bidding process. S. No. 01 to 01 (NIB No. 12 (2024-25) & 01 to 12 (NIB No. 13 (2024-25)
UBN No. (VPN2425WSOB02032) to (VPN2425WSOB02035), (VPN2425WSOB02042) to (VPN2425WSOB02043), (VPN2425WSOB02045) to (VPN2425WSOB02048), (VPN2425WSOB02057) to (VPN2425WSOB02059).
Superintending Engineer (CIVIL), Jodhpur
Raj.Samwad/C/24/8079 RRVPN/TR-6474/2024

E-mail :- cenh.pwd@rajasthan.gov.in
Office of the Chief Engineer (NH) PWD Rajasthan
PWD Campus, Jacob Road, Civil Lines, Jaipur
Phone :- 01412954570
File No-138 Date- 14/11/2024
SHORT TERM NIB NO: 3/2024-25
RFP for Procurement of **Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report of 4/6 Lane Green Field Expressways in the State of Rajasthan (Package no 4: Beawar - Bharatpur Expressway)"** are invited from interested agencies upto 03:00 PM on 03.12.2024. Other particulars of RFP may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in/) of the state and department website www.pwd.rajasthan.gov.in. The approximate total value of the procurement is Rs. 426.43 Lakh.
UBN: PWD2425SLOB09743
(Satish Chand Agrawal)
Chief Engineer (NH)
PWD, Rajasthan
DIPR/C/11339/2024

TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED
Mondipatti, Manapparai Tk, Trichy Dist.- 621306
Ph:04324-277001; Email: purchase.wood@tnpl.co.in
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No.	Description of Work	Due Date
242523 002907	Procurement of Debarked Eucalyptus pulpwood from open market sources of Karnataka to TNPL Unit-II, Mondipatti, Trichy dist.	27.11.24

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website only. Detailed requirements, Period, Terms & conditions, Tender fee, EMD, etc., are available in tender document at our websites: **www.tnpl.com**
DIPR/5064/Tender/2024 *TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper*

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF TELANGANA LIMITED
e - TENDER NOTICE
The TGTransco invites online Bids under e-procurement for supply of the following Equipment.

Sl.No.	Tender Specification No.	Description of Equipment
1.	TGPMM41-27/2024	33kV CTs (2000-1000-600-400/1-1-1)A
2.	TGPMM41-28/2024	33kV CTs (600-400/1-1)A
3.	TGPMM41-29/2024	33kV CTs (400-200/1-1)A
4.	TGPMM41-30/2024	33kV Pts

Bidders can have further details and download the tender schedule from e-procurement platform@ www.tender.telangana.gov.in (Telangana State).
Contact Nos.: **CHIEF ENGINEER/P&MM, TGTransco, Phone: 040-23396000 (Extn.:3670/3583/3276/3522)** 040-23303736, www.tgtransco.com
Sd/-
Chief Engineer/P&MM
DIPR R.O. No. : 678-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2024-25

RAJASTHAN STATE GANGANAGAR SUGAR MILLS LIMITED
(Centre of Excellence for Revenue Research & Analysis) Bhawan, Plot no. 2, Near Aranya Bhawan, Jhalana Institutional Area, CIN:U15421RJ1945SGC000285 वेबसाईट : www.excise.rajasthan.gov.in ई-मेल: dgmpurchase.rsgsm@rajasthan.gov.in
NIB. NO. RSGSM/Old Glass Bottle/RC/2024-25/Pur/ Dated :- 20/11/2024
NOTICE INVITING BID
पुराने ग्लास निप्स (180 मिली) और बोतल और (750 मिली) के लिए इच्छुक बोली दाताओं से 11/12/2024 को सांय 5.00 बजे तक बोलियां आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। बोली के अन्य विवरण राज्य सरकार के प्रोक्योरमेन्ट पोर्टल (**http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in**) और विभागीय वेबसाइट **http://rajexcise.gov.in** पर देखे जा सकते हैं।
UBN: GSM2425GLRC00063
Raj.Samwad/C/24/8108 **Dy. General Manager (Purchase)**

भारत सरकार /Government of India
अंतरिक्ष विभाग/ Department of Space
भारतीय अंतरिक्ष विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान
Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology
[वि.अ.आयोगअधिनियम 1956 कीधारा 3 केअधीनमानितविश्वविद्यालयघोषित]
[Declared as Deemed to be University under Sec.3 of the UGC Act 1956]
वलियमला पोस्ट/ Valiamala PO,तिरुवनंतपुरम/ Thiruvananthapuram -695 547
दूरभाष/Phone: 0471-2568603, फैक्स/Fax: 0471-2568602, ई-मेल/E-mail: recruitment@iist.ac.in
संविदा पदों के लिए प्रवेश साक्षात्कार
WALK- IN-INTERVIEW FOR CONTRACT POSITIONS
भारतीय अंतरिक्ष विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (आईआईएसटी) संविदा के आधार पर निम्नलिखित पदों को भरने हेतु आईआईएसटी, वलियमला, तिरुवनंतपुरम में प्रवेश साक्षात्कार का आयोजन करता है।
Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) conducts walk-in interview for the following contract positions at IIST Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram:

संविदा पदों का नाम Name of Contract Position	प्रवेश साक्षात्कार की तारीख Date of Walk-in-Interview	रिपोर्टिंग का समय Reporting Time
चिकित्सा अधिकारी Medical Officer	27.11.2024	1300 HRS
स्थानन अधिकारी Placement officer	28.11.2024	0900 HRS

शैक्षिक योग्यता, आयु सीमा, अनुभव, रिपोर्टिंग का समय, आदि से संबंधित अधिक जानकारी के लिए तथा आवेदन पत्र डाउनलोड करने के लिए कृपया हमारी वेबसाईट https://www.iist.ac.in/career/2 देखें।
For more details such as Educational Qualification, Age Limit, Experience, Reporting Time etc., and for downloading application form, please visit our website https://www.iist.ac.in/career/2.
विज्ञापन सं./ Advt. No: IIST/ Admn/RMT/07/03/2024 dated 22.11.2024

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Project Division (West), Joint Commissioner
(West) Office Premises, 2nd Floor, Sampige Road,
Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560 020
No.: EE/P-W/TEND/12/2024-25 Date: 20.11.2024
INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)
Tender Notification (Two Cover System)
(Through GOK KPPP Portal only)
The Executive Engineer, Project (West) Division, BBMP, Bengaluru invites short term tenders from eligible contractors registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organisations for the supply Works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Repair of existing building and construction of additional floor to BBMP High School at Maruthi Mandira in Wrad No. 126 (New Ward No. 140) in Govindarajanagar Constituency. **Estimate Cost (Rs. in Lakhs):** 50.00, **EMD (in Rs.):** 50,000/-, **Category:** ST.
2	Demolition and Reconstruction of BBMP Shishuvihara and Primary School at Govindaraja Nagara. **Estimate Cost (Rs. in Lakhs):** 179.68, **EMD (in Rs.):** 2,70,000/-, **Category:** Other.

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents may be downloaded through e-portal from: **21.11.2024** form **3:00 p.m.** onwards. **(2)** Pre-bid meeting on: **06.12.2024** at **3:00 P.M. (3)** Last Date and Time for receipt of Tenders: **10.12.2024** upto **3:00 P.M. (4)** Technical Bid Opening: **11.12.2024** at **3:00 P.M. (5)** Financial Bid Opening if possible: **13.12.2024** at **11:00 a.m.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project (West), BBMP

GAZA STRIP

Dozens feared dead or missing in Gaza after Israeli air strikes

REUTERS

Dozens of people were killed or unaccounted for after Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip, a hospital director and the civil defence agency said on Thursday. "We can confirm that 22 martyrs were transferred [to a hospital] after a strike targeted a house" in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood, civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said. AFP

HONG KONG

Advanced Chinese assault warship docks at Hong Kong Island pier

AFP

Hainan, an advanced Chinese warship thought to play a key role in the country's South China Sea and Taiwan strategies, sailed into Hong Kong on Thursday, part of a publicity campaign showcasing Beijing's increasingly sophisticated military force. The 36,000-tonne vessel was docked at a Hong Kong Island pier on Thursday. AFP

BEIRUT

Israel killed 71 pro-Iran fighters in Syria's Palmyra, says monitor

REUTERS

Israeli strikes killed 71 pro-Iran militants in Syria's Palmyra, with over a third of them identified as fighters from Iraq and Lebanon, a monitor said on Thursday. The strikes targeted three sites in the city renowned for its ancient ruins, including one that hit a meeting of pro-Iranian groups with leaders from Al-Nujaba and Hezbollah. AFP

WASHINGTON

Matt Gaetz drops bid for Trump attorney-general due to opposition

REUTERS

Matt Gaetz, who was nominated by President-elect Donald Trump to be U.S. attorney-general, on Thursday pulled out of the selection process after widespread opposition including from within his Republican Party. "Matt has a wonderful future, and I look forward to watching all of the great things he will do," Mr. Trump said. AFP

ICC issues arrest warrants against Netanyahu, Gallant, Hamas leaders

The Israeli PM and his former Defence Minister face allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity; Netanyahu slams the warrants as 'disgraceful' and 'anti-Semitic'; Joe Biden expresses support for Israel's 'right to defend itself'

Associated Press
THE HAGUE

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants on Thursday for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and Hamas officials, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity over their 13-month war in Gaza and the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, respectively.

Mr. Netanyahu condemned the arrest warrant against him, saying Israel "rejects with disgust the absurd and false actions". In a statement released by his office, he said: "There is nothing more just than the war that Israel has been waging in Gaza."

Serious charges: Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant during a press meet in the Kirya military base in Tel Aviv in 2023. REUTERS

The decision turns Mr. Netanyahu and the others into internationally wanted suspects and is likely to further isolate them and complicate efforts to negotiate a cease-fire to end the fighting. But its practical implications could be limited since Israel and its major ally, the U.S., are not members of the court and two of the Hamas officials were killed in the conflict.

Mr. Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders have condemned ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan's request for warrants as "disgraceful" and "anti-Semitic". U.S. President Joe Biden blasted the prosecutor and expressed support for Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas. Hamas also slammed the request.

The three-judge panel issued a unanimous decision to issue warrants for Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Gallant. "The Chamber considered that there are reasonable grounds to believe that both individuals intentionally and knowingly deprived the civilian population in Gaza of objects indispensable to their survival, including food, water, and medicine and medical supplies, as well as fuel and electricity," the decision said.

The court also issued a warrant for Mohammed Deif, one of the leaders of Hamas, over the October 2023 attacks that triggered Israel's offensive in Gaza. The ICC chief prosecutor withdrew his request for warrants for two other senior Hamas figures, Yahya Sinwar and Ismail Haniyeh, after they were both killed in the conflict.

U.S. Department of Justice seeks to break up Google

Associated Press
SAN FRANCISCO

U.S. regulators want a federal judge to break up Google to prevent the company from continuing to squash competition through its dominant search engine after a court found it had maintained an abusive monopoly over the past decade.

The proposed breakup floated in a 23-page document filed late on Wednesday by the U.S. Department of Justice calls for sweeping punishments that would include a sale of Google's industry-leading Chrome web browser and impose restrictions to prevent Android from favouring its own search engine.

A sale of Chrome "will permanently stop Google's control of this critical search access point and allow rival search engines the ability to access the browser that for many users is a gateway to the Internet," Justice Department lawyers argued in their filing.

The 23-page document calls for punishments which include the sale of Chrome web browser. AP

Although regulators stopped short of demanding Google sell Android too, they asserted the judge should make it clear the company could still be required to divest its smartphone operating system if its oversight committee continues to see evidence of misconduct.

The broad scope of the recommended penalties underscores how severely regulators operating under President Joe Biden's administration believe Google should be punished following an August ruling by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta that branded the company as a monopolist.

The Justice Department decision-makers who will inherit the case after President-elect Donald Trump takes office next year might not be as strident. The Washington D.C. court hearings on Google's punishment are scheduled to begin in April and Judge Mehta is aiming to issue his final decision before Labour Day.

Russia launched an ICBM for the first time: Ukraine

Levelling up: Flashes over the Ukrainian city of Dnipro. Kyiv has accused Russia of launching an ICBM on Thursday. AFP

Associated Press
KYIV

Ukraine claimed on Thursday that Russia launched an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) overnight at a city. If confirmed, it would be the first time Moscow has used such a weapon in the war.

Ukraine did not provide any evidence that an ICBM was used in the attack on the central city of Dnipro, apparently armed with conventional warheads.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a missile used "matches the speed and altitude" of an ICBM.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the country's forces had hit Ukraine with a new mid-range ballistic missile.

Mr. Putin said in a televised address that Russia carried out "testing in combat conditions of one of the newest Russian mid-range missile systems... Our engineers named it Oreshnik," which means hazel tree in Russian.

Gunmen kill at least 14 in Pakistan

Associated Press
PESHAWAR

Gunmen opened fire on passenger vehicles carrying Shia Muslim civilians in restive northwest Pakistan on Thursday, killing at least 14 people and wounding 30 others in one of the deadliest such attacks in recent years in the region.

Children make up 40% of displaced in Myanmar, says UN

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Children made up nearly 40% of the more than 3.4 million people in Myanmar displaced by civil war and climate change-driven extreme weather, the UN agency for children said on Thursday.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in 2021 and launched a crackdown that sparked an armed uprising against the junta's rule.

The Southeast Asian nation was also battered by Typhoon Yagi in September, triggering major floods that killed more than 400 people and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes.

"The humanitarian crisis in Myanmar is reaching a critical inflexion point, with escalating conflict and climate shocks putting children and families at unprecedented risk," UNICEF deputy executive director Ted Chaiban said in a statement on Thursday.

"Over 3.4 million people have been displaced across the country, nearly 40% of whom are children."

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's elected govt. in 2021

The junta is battling widespread armed opposition to its 2021 coup, and its soldiers have been accused of bloody rampages and using air and artillery strikes to punish civilian communities.

'Devastating impact'

The fighting, as well as severe climate events like Typhoon Yagi, have had a "devastating impact" on children, Mr. Chaiban said, leaving them displaced, vulnerable to violence and cut off from health care and education.

At least 650 children have been killed or wounded in violence in the country this year.

"The increasing use of deadly weapons in civilian areas, including airstrikes and landmines hitting homes, hospitals, and schools, has severely restricted the already limited safe spaces for children, robbing them of their right to security," he said.

भारत सरकार
अंतरिक्ष विभाग
इसरो नोदन कॉम्प्लेक्स
निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह
महेंद्रगिरि पी ओ-627 133
दूरभाष : 04637–28-1672 | 1582 | 3582
फैक्स : 04637 – 281681

इसरो isro

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
ISRO PROPULSION COMPLEX
CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP
MAHENDRAGIRI PO - 627 133
Telephone: 04637 – 28-1672 | 1582 | 3582
Fax: 04637 – 281681.

ई–निविदा सूचना / E-TENDER NOTICE

दिनांक/Dated : 19-11-2024

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु **ई–निविदा** द्वारा मद–दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।
On Behalf of the President of India, item-rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following work:

क्र. सं. / Sl. No.	कार्य का नाम / Name of Work	प्राक्कलित लागत / Estimated Cost ₹(लाखों में) (in Lakhs)	कार्य पूरा होने की अवधि / Period of completion	ईएमडी / EMD(₹)
1	एनआईटी सं:आईपीआरसी/ सीएमजी/ टीडी/ ई–126/ एमडब्ल्यू–03/2024-25 / NIT no:IPRC/CMG/TD/e-126/MW-03/2024-25			
	आईपीआरसी, महेंद्रगिरि में ईएसएस टंकी भंडारण सुविधा का निर्माण (सिविल, पीएच एवं यांत्रिक द्वार संबंधी कार्य) Construction of ESS tankage storage facility at IPRC, Mahendragiri (Civil, PH & Mech. door works)	958.56	18 (अठारह महीने / Eighteen months)	19,17,200

ऑनलाइन निवेदन करने की तिथि: Dates for Online Request : From 22-11-2024[10:00 hours/ बजे] से To: 06-12-2024[23:30 hours/ बजे] तक।
बोली स्पष्टीकरण / Bid Clarification : From 22-11-2024 (10:10 बजे) hrs से To: 07-12-2024 (23:59 बजे) hrs तक।
नियत समय व प्रस्तुतीकरण की तिथि: Due Date & Time of Submission : 12-12-2024 [14:00 hours/बजे] तक।
अधिक जानकारी के लिए देखें : For further details visit: www.isro.gov.in/tenders (या/or) www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO.
नोट : उपर्युक्त कार्य (कार्यों) के लिए भविष्य में सभी पत्राचार (शुद्धिपत्र) केवल उपर्युक्त वेबसाइट पर ही प्रकाशित किए जाएंगे।
Note : All future correspondence (Corrigenda) for the above work(s) shall be published only on the websites mentioned above.

समूह निदेशक, सीएमजी, आईपीआरसी / GROUP DIRECTOR, CMG, IPRC

DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY
Ministry of Science & Technology
Government of India

DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization · RCB Regional Centre for Biotechnology

AWARD OF DBT – RESEARCH ASSOCIATESHIP IN BIOTECHNOLOGY & LIFE SCIENCES

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: 2024 – 2025 / Call II

Applications are invited from Indian Nationals for the award of "DBT-Research Associateship" for pursuing research in frontier areas of Biotechnology and Life Sciences. The Associateship is tenable in Premier Research Institutions/Universities including non-profit R&D Institutions within India. The Associateships are awarded under the "DBT-Research Associateship" programme supported by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India.

Start Date of Online Application : 22nd November, 2024
End Date of Online Application : 03rd January, 2025 (up to 05:00 PM)

Detailed information on the fellowship grant, eligibility criteria and application process is available at DBT website- www.dbtindia.gov.in and RCB website- www.rcb.res.in. To apply, interested applicants may kindly visit DBT-RA website- https://ra.dbtindia.gov.in/ Or Common Fellowship Portal via https://fellowships.gov.in/

Interested and eligible applicants from the North East Region are also encouraged to apply.

For any queries, please contact DBT-HRD Project & Management Unit, Regional Centre for Biotechnology at ra.dbt@rcb.res.in.

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking) Corporate Identity No. U40109UR2001SGC025867/2358
Victoria Cross Vijeta Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun
Telephone No. 0135-2762444 Fax No. 0135-2763839, Email ID: cgmupcl@yahoo.co.in
Websites: (www.mstcecommerce.com)

CORRIGENDUM FOR NOTICE INVITING TENDER AGAINST TENDER SPECIFICATION NO. 19/CE(COMM)/UPCL-19/LTPP/2024

The slight modification is being made for NIT against tender specification no. 19/CE(COMM)/UPCL-19/LTPP/2024 and date of Pre-Application Conference-1 be read on **15.01.2025** in place of **15.01.2024.**
All other terms and condition shall remain unchanged.

No: 632/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2
Date: 21.11.2024
CE (Commercial)

SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION. Use L.E.D Bulb to Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912) "Pay Electricity Bill Online 24x7 from www.upcl.org (For Information on Electricity theft, informer may report to Toll free No. 18001804185/ Fax No. 0135-2760911)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail: ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CE-Roads-II-17/2024-25

1. The Chief Engineer (Roads-II), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover system through ONLINE MODE form eligible contractors for Roadwork as mentioned below:
2. Nature of work : **Road works**
3. No. of work : **5 Nos.**
4. Tender Paper cost : **Rs.10,000.00**
5. Class of Contractor : **'A' Class / Special Class / Super Class**
6. Available of bid document the website : **From 10.00 A.M. of 28.11.2024 to 5.30 PM of 10.12.2024**
7. Date of opening of Bid : **Dt.11.12.2024 at 11.30 A.M.**
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tenderodisha.gov.in.** Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Roads-II), Odisha

B-638
OIPR-34172/11/0008/2425

ODISHA CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LTD.
(A GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA UNDERTAKING)
CENTRAL STORE & MACHINERY PROJECT, BHUBANESWAR - 751012 (ODISHA)
TENDER CALL NOTICE NO: - 61/OCC/CST-04/works/896/2015(Vol.III), Dated. 19.11.2024

Tenders in conformity with term & conditions are invited from reputed transporters / fleet owners for "Dismantling, loading and transportation of TATA HITACHI CRAWLER CRANE (KH-500) a 100 ton capacity crane from Anandapur Barrage Gate Erection Project, Anandapur in the district of Keonjhar and unloading, assembly along with trial testing and load test at Kanupur Gate Erection Project, Basudevpur, Dist: Keonjhar as per Direction of Engineer-In-Charge." For further details can be seen from our website www.odishaconstruction.com.

The last date and time of submission of tender document is **29.11.2024 at 3.00 P.M** and will be opened on same date **at 4.00 PM** (Bidders are requested to visit above website regularly for any changes, since it will not be published in news paper again.

Sd/- Senior Manager (Mech.)

CAD - 1653
OIPR-34120/11/0025/2425

KEEN EYE

Hope things fall in place for Shami to join the team, says Bumrah

FILE PHOTO

Jasprit Bumrah expressed his delight over Mohammed Shami's recovery process following a corrective surgery. "Shami *bhai* has started to play cricket. He is an integral part of this team. I am sure the management is keeping a keen eye. Hopefully if things fall in place, you might see him here as well," Bumrah said.

HIGH PRAISE

Cummins impressed with the way Nitish goes about his work

GETTY IMAGES

Pat Cummins had some kind words about all-rounder Nitish Reddy. The two turned out for Sunrisers Hyderabad for which Cummins was the skipper. "Loved playing alongside Nitish. He is a great young guy starting out on his professional career. I am impressed with how he went about his work. He can swing the ball a bit," Cummins said.

OUT OF CONTROL

IPL auction not a distraction during the Perth Test: Cummins

AFP

The Indian Premier League's auction at Jeddah on November 24 and 25, drew some attention at Perth on Thursday. Asked if the auction could be a distraction during the first Test involving India and Australia, Pat Cummins said: "I don't think so. Most of the guys have been in auctions before. The reality is you can't really do anything."

GOOD SHOW

Titans get the better of Warriorz; Steelers overcome Bulls

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Telugu Titans scored a 31-29 victory in Match 67 of Pro Kabaddi League at the Noida Indoor Stadium on Thursday. The hero for Titans was Vijay Malik, whose 14 points was crucial as it rode out a late Bengal Warriorz challenge to secure five points. In the second match, Haryana Steelers got the better of Bengaluru Bulls 32-26.

India aims for a hat-trick of triumphs Down Under

Skipper Bumrah has to inspire the pace attack; Padikkal may come into the picture as will all-rounder Nitish for the Perth Test; Australia eyeing a series win after two previous reverses

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
PERTH

Two men fused by their passion for speed, split by nationalities, and thrown together into a sporting rivalry, stretched their hands towards each other. In the background, the sun was beating down on the grass, all golden hue and green tinge, and in the shade a cool breeze demanded respect and woollens.

Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins, froze time for a bit, as the two, with a son each, discussed parenthood and baby-steps. This was life distilled into its best essence. As proud fathers, splendid pacers and rival captains, Bumrah and Cummins then posed with the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at the Optus Stadium here on Thursday noon. And it was time to get ready for a long Australian summer that would gain its sporting high from the five Tests pitting India against Cummins and his men.

When the first Test commences on Friday, one of cricket's greatest rivalries will get a fresh chapter. The Ashes and the memories about India-Pakistan Tests linger, but there is no discounting the charms, the adrenaline, and the nail-biting climaxes that seem inevitable when India and Australia face off. India arrives after suffering a 0-3 loss in its backyard against New Zealand but history would whisper about the stunning Test series triumphs Down Under in the 2018-19 and 2020-21 series.

Batting buddies: Padikkal may get a look-in, while Jaiswal could have Rahul for company at the top of the order. GETTY IMAGES

Lively pitch

The surface is expected to offer pace and bounce and it was no surprise when Indian coach Gautam Gambhir sauntered towards the pitch on match-eve and had a long gaze. He has enough to ponder about. Regular skipper Rohit Sharma is on a paternity break; Virat Kohli, a massive hero equally in Australia, is searching for runs; and Shubman Gill with a left-thumb injury, is a doubtful starter.

The batting order has to be tweaked and Devdutt Padikkal may come into the picture with perhaps K.L. Rahul moving atop the batting tree in tandem with Yashasvi Jaiswal. With demand for some batting insurance lower down the order, the team-management may be inclined towards seam-bowling all-rounder Nitish Reddy while Washington Sundar is an option.

An Australian line-up with its penchant for left-handed batters could also bring R. Ashwin as the counter-point. Bumrah, with Mohammed Siraj for support, has to inspire a seemingly under-cooked pace attack.

Clear threat

Australia, meanwhile, is itching to wrest back a trophy that has gone missing from its cupboard after the triumphant 2014-15 series. Cummins with fellow speedsters Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood are a clear threat and while the batting-order will miss David Warner, there is enough experience thanks to the trio of Usman Khawaja, Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne.

The last time India and Australia were locked in a five-Test duel in 1991-92, Allan Border's men won at 4-0. The only link with those days is current Aussie star Mitchell Marsh, whose father Geoff played back then, and the latter's rivals, Indian selector Subroto Banerjee and Ravi Shastri, back here as a commentator. Since that time much water has flown down Perth's Swan River while India chases fresh ripples in its fortunes.

The teams (from):
Australia: Pat Cummins (Capt.), Usman Khawaja, Travis Head, Steve Smith, Marnus Labuschagne, Josh Inglis (wicket-keeper), Alex Carey (wicket-keeper), Mitchell Marsh, Nathan McSweeney, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Scott Boland and Nathan Lyon.
India: Jasprit Bumrah (Capt.), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Shubman Gill, K.L. Rahul, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Dhruv Jurel (wicket-keeper), R. Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Mohammed Siraj, Nitish Reddy, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna and Harshit Rana.
Match officials: Umpires: Richard Kettleborough and Christopher Gaffaney; **Third umpire:** Richard Illingworth; **Match referee:** Ranjan Madugalle.
Match starts at 7.50 a.m. IST.

Battle for Lord's

WITH A WTC FINAL SPOT AT STAKE, AUSTRALIA AND INDIA — THE TOP TWO IN THE TABLE — GET READY FOR WHAT PROMISES TO BE AN ENTHRALLING SHOWDOWN

FORM GUIDE
(last five matches, latest game first)

INDIA	L	L	L	W	W
AUSTRALIA	W	W	L	W	W

The Australia-India Test series is being played for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy (BGT) since 1996-97

- India and Australia had met in 50 Tests (India won 8, Australia 24, Tied 1, Drawn 17) before BGT
- The two teams also faced off in the WTC final in 2023 which the Aussies won

SEASON-BY-SEASON

	Host	Winner	Result
1996-97	India	India	1-0 (1)
1997-98	India	India	2-1 (3)
1999-00	Australia	Australia	3-0 (3)
2000-01	India	India	2-1 (3)
2003-04*	Australia	Drawn	1-1 (4)
2004-05	India	Australia	2-1 (4)
2007-08	Australia	Australia	2-1 (4)
2008-09	India	India	2-0 (4)
2010-11	India	India	2-0 (2)
2011-12	Australia	Australia	4-0 (4)
2012-13	India	India	4-0 (4)
2014-15	Australia	Australia	2-0 (4)
2016-17	India	India	2-1 (4)
2018-19	Australia	India	2-1 (4)
2020-21	Australia	India	2-1 (4)
2022-23	India	India	2-1 (4)

*India retained the trophy

H2H IN BGT

	Tests	Ind	Aus	Drawn
Overall	56	24	20	12
In Australia	27	6	14	7

THE BGT CHART

Overall	BATTING	In Australia*
Tendulkar (3262, 65 inns)	Most runs	**For India:** Kohli (1352, 25 inns) **For Australia:** Smith (1082, 16 inns)
Clarke (329 n.o., Sydney, 2012)	Highest	Kohli (169, Melbourne, 2014) Smith (192, Melbourne, 2014)
Tendulkar (9)	Most 100s	Kohli (6); Smith (5)
	BOWLING	
Lyon (116, 47 inns)	Most wickets	**For India:** Ashwin (39, 18 inns) **For Australia:** Lyon (60, 28 inns)
Lyon (8/50, Bengaluru, 2017)	Best bowling (innings)	Bumrah (6/33, Melbourne, 2018) Lyon (7/152, Adelaide, 2014)
Kumble (10)	Most five-fors	Bumrah and Siraj (one each) Lyon (4)

**Players from the current squads*

13 Dhoni's matches as captain in BGT — a record. He won eight, lost four and drew the other

32 Harbhajan's bag of wickets in 2000-01, a series high

34 Tendulkar's BGT appearances, the most by a player

769 Smith's run tally in 2014-15, the best in a series

THE DATES

First Test: November 22-26, **Perth**, 7.50 a.m.
Second Test: December 6-10 (Day-Night), **Adelaide**, 9.30 a.m.
Third Test: December 14-18, **Brisbane**, 5.50 a.m.
Fourth Test: December 26-30, **Melbourne**, 5 a.m.
Fifth Test: January 3-7, **Sydney**, 5 a.m.
ALL TIMES IST

WTC STANDINGS		P	W	L	D	DED*	PTS	PCT
1	Australia	12	8	3	1	10	90	62.50
2	India	14	8	5	1	2	98	58.33
3	Sri Lanka	9	5	4	0	0	60	55.56
4	New Zealand	11	6	5	0	0	72	54.55
5	South Africa	8	4	3	1	0	52	54.17
6	England	19	9	9	1	19	93	40.79
7	Pakistan	10	4	6	0	8	40	33.33
8	Bangladesh	10	3	7	0	3	33	27.50
9	West Indies	9	1	6	2	0	20	18.52

**Deductions: Points are deducted for slow over rates*

Points system: 12 for a win, 6 for a tie, 4 for a draw

- The teams are ranked according to the percentage of points won and the top two progress to the final at Lord's in 2025

This will be India's final series in the current cycle while Australia will play two more Tests (Jan. 29-Feb. 2; Feb. 6-10) in Sri Lanka

SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO

COMPILED BY R. NARAYANAN AND G. PRASAD

We are not carrying any baggage from New Zealand series: Bumrah

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
PERTH

Thunderbolts on the field, measured words off it, seem to be Jasprit Bumrah's philosophy.

The Indian captain presented an optimistic view about his men's prospects in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series commencing at the Optus Stadium here on Friday.

Speaking to sports correspondents on Thursday, Bumrah said: "We are very well prepared. We came here early, got some time at the WACA Ground, and a lot of the youngsters are coming here for the first time. When we came here for the first time as well, we got less time than this, and we still ended up winning the series."

Slipping into the captain's boots due to Rohit Sharma's absence from the first Test, Bumrah is ready for the challenge.

All set: Bumrah is ready for the captaincy challenge. AFP

"I love the responsibility. I wanted to do the tough job ever since I was a child. Always wanted to be in the thick of things. I have a lot of faith in my instincts and gut.

"As for fast-bowling captains, Pat (Cummins) has done a phenomenal job, in the past for India, Kapil Dev did a fabulous job."

Asked if he faces the conundrum of bowling captains, either under-bowling or over-bowling himself, Bumrah replied: "I look at it in a different manner. I can manage myself the best when I am the captain, because I know when I am fresh, when I know I have to push myself, and I know when I have to take extra responsibility.

Research

"Obviously bowlers do a lot more research, and are data-driven as well, more than batters, because that's how the game is headed."

More importantly, Bumrah stressed that the 0-3 loss in the Tests against New Zealand has been put behind. "Yes, we were disappointed but we are not carrying any baggage, we come here with a fresh mindset against a different opposition."

Cummins hopes Australia can wrest back the coveted trophy

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
PERTH

There is a quiet confidence innate to Pat Cummins. Striding into the press conference hall wearing his worn-out baggy green cap at the Optus Stadium here on Thursday, the Australian skipper hoped that his men would wrest back the elusive Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

There were also moments when the brotherhood of fast bowlers was on view as he praised his counterpart Jasprit Bumrah. Ahead of the first Test against India here from Friday, Cummins extensively spoke to the media.

Excerpts...

The trophy that matters

"For about half in the change room, we haven't won the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, so it's one of the last things to tick off.

Two of a kind: Cummins is excited to see fellow pacer Bumrah at the helm of the Indian team. AFP

"With every challenge that was thrown at us over the last few years we have stepped up and done well. We know India is right up there with one of the best teams in the world, so we are excited."

Fast bowling captains

"Yeah, it is great to see and should happen more. In the New Zealand series last year, it was good with Tim Southee as captain. I don't think it really changes too much again, but it's one of those rare things. So, yeah, looking forward to seeing how he (Bumrah) goes about his work out there. As a fan of fast bowling, it's always good to see."

Planning

"We make plans for a whole squad. India has got a lot of depth. Most of us have played the IPL and seen how newcomers step up straight away.

"They are missing a couple of guys we are more familiar with, but we know whoever they pick is going to be good enough for Test cricket."

Surface-tension

"The pitch looks good with an even coverage of grass. You know, it always looks really good here."

INBRIEF

Double Olympic triathlon champion Alistair retires

Double Olympic champion Alistair Brownlee of England announced his retirement from triathlon at the age of 36 on Thursday. Brownlee won gold medals in London in 2012 and Rio de Janeiro in 2016, with his younger brother, Jonny, making the podium on both occasions. He was also world champion in 2009 and 2011, and a four-time European champion.

Lakshya sails into the quarterfinals, Sindhu exits

Lakshya Sen progressed to the quarterfinals with a straight-game win, but P.V. Sindhu's campaign ended in the second round of the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament in Shenzhen on Thursday.

The results: **Second round**: **Men**: Lakshya Sen bt Rasmus Gemke (Den) 21-6, 21-18; **Doubles**: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Rasmus Kjaer & Frederik Soggard (Den) 21-19, 21-15.
Women: Yeo Jia Min (Sgp) bt P.V. Sindhu 21-16, 17-21, 21-23; Natsuki Nidaira (Jpn) bt Anupama Upadhyaya 21-7, 21-14; Supanida Katethong (Tha) bt Malvika Bansod 21-9, 21-9; **Doubles**: Liu Sheng Shu & Tan Ning (Chn) bt Treesa Jolly & Gayatri Gopi Chand 21-16, 21-11.

Vaidehi knocks out third seed Jia-Jing Lu in Caloundra event

Qualifier Vaidehi Chaudhari beat third seed Jia-Jing Lu of China 6-1, 6-2 in the first round of the $40,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Caloundra, Australia, on Thursday. Vaidehi also made the quarterfinals in partnership with Shrivalli Bhamidipaty.

The results: $82,000 Challenger, Yokohama: Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals: Benjamin Hassan (Lbn) & Saketh Myneni bt Ryuki Matsuda & Rio Noguchi (Jpn) 6-3, 6-2.
$15,000 ITF men, Luanda: Pre-quarterfinals: Gregor Ramskogler (Aut) bt Parth Aggarwal 6-3, 6-2; Robert Strombachs (Ger) bt Yash Yadav 6-0, 6-0; First round: Chirag Duhan bt lUke Cripps (Aus) 6-7(5), 2-0 (retired); Victor Pagotto (Bra) bt Rishabdev Raman 6-4, 6-4; Yash Yadav bt Breno Braga (Bra) 6-3, 5-7, 7-5; Parth Aggarwal bt Patrik Oplustil (Cze) 3-6, 7-5, 6-2.
$40,000 ITF women, Caloundra: First round: Choi Onyu (Kor) bt Shrivalli Bhamidipaty 6-3, 2-6, 6-2; Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Jia-Jing Lu (Chn) 6-1, 6-2; Ankita Raina bt Lily Taylor (Aus) 6-3, 6-3. **Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals:** Shrivalli & Vaidehi bt Gabriella Da Silva Fick & Alana Parnaby (Aus) 6-4, 7-6(3).
$25,000 ITF women, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Second round: Victoria Rodriguez (Mex) bt Saumya Vig 6-0, 6-0.
$15,000 ITF women, Monastir: Pre-quarterfinals: Mathilde Lollia (Fra) bt Zeel Desai 6-3, 6-3.

Bihar to host Khelo India Youth Games in April, 2025

After successfully conducting the Women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament at Rajgir, Bihar will host the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) in April, 2025. The Khelo India Para Games (KIPG), which was organised for the first time in New Delhi last year, will also be held in the same State. There will be a gap of 10 to 15 days between KIYG and KIPG.

Kosovo forfeits Nations League fixture against Romania

UEFA ruled on Wednesday that Kosovo had forfeited in Nations League game in Romania by leaving the pitch in stoppage time and not returning, after hearing pro-Serbia chants. UEFA deemed the Kosovo football federation "responsible for the match not being played in full" and said the team would forfeit it 3-0.

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: China Masters, Sports 18-1 & JioCinema, 7.30 a.m.
Australia vs India: 1st Test, day 1, Star Sports 1 & Hotstar, 7.50 a.m.
West Indies vs Bangladesh: 1st Test, day 1, FanCode, 7.30 p.m.
PKL: Star Sports 2 & Hotstar, 8 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV 1 a.m. (Saturday).
LaLiga: gxr.world, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday).

India will need to drastically improve its shooting when it takes on Qatar

The hosts will be boosted by the return of Amjyot, while the visitors are in good form after finishing second in the King Abdullah II International Cup

BASKETBALL

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Qatar is grooming its team for the future with an eye on the 2027 World Cup, which it will be hosting. Having a host of players in the U-19 age category, Qatar, under new coach Hakan Demir, may be short of experience, but it does possess hoopsters with rapid speed and exceptional shooting skills.

In his second stint as India's head coach, Scott Flemming has been focusing on shooting, which India failed miserably in crunch situations in the first two matches of the first window of the FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers 2025 when it lost to Kazakhstan and Iran.

Qatar, too, will be under pressure, having lost its first two matches to Iran and Kazakhstan. India will have to improve its defence and, most importantly, shooting, when it takes on Qatar in a Group-E clash in the second window of the qualifiers at the Nehru Indoor Stadium here on Friday.

Prep time: The Indian men's basketball coach Flemming with his wards at a practice session. R. RAVINDRAN

Flemming has been with the boys since July, getting them to improve their shooting.

"We've really worked on our perimeter shooting. But if we shoot like I know we're capable of, I think that'll be our strength. And we've got a couple of veterans, big men, who can do that," said the 66-year-old American.

Qatar is in good form, having finished second in the King Abdullah II International basketball cup held in Amman (Jordan) a few days back.

Twenty-one-year-old Indian point guard Pranav Prince said India is ready for the challenge.

Quite close

"The first half against Iran and Kazakhstan in the first window were quite close, which means we can compete against any team. We lost because of lack of experience towards the end of the game.

"We will have to win two of the next four matches, including away ties against Qatar and Iran in the third window if we have to qualify for the finals in Saudi Arabia next year," he said.

India, with quite a few experienced players, will be bolstered by the return of 32-year-old forward Amjyot Singh, who is coming back from a foot surgery.

Italy regains Billie Jean King Cup

Agence France-Presse
MALAGA

Italy won the Billie Jean King Cup for the fifth time as Jasmine Paolini beat Rebecca Sramkova to secure a dominant 2-0 win over Slovakia on Wednesday.

World No. 4 Paolini triumphed 6-2, 6-1 in the second singles rubber to follow up Lucia Bronzetti's 6-2, 6-4 victory against Viktoria Hruncakova. The victory capped a stunning year for Paolini who finished as runner-up at Roland Garros and Wimbledon.

Italy, the runner-up to Canada in last year's final, became the 'world champion' for the first time since 2013.

Slovakia, which won the competition in 2002, had never lost a BJK Cup tie in Spain.

The underdogs defeated USA, Australia and Great Britain on a stunning run to this year's final.

Italy, captained by Tathiana Garbin, defeated Iga Swiatek's Poland as well as Japan at the finals on the way to winning the tournament dubbed the 'World Cup of Tennis'.

Top of the world: The victorious Italian squad with its big prize. GETTY IMAGES

Australia beats USA, enters the semifinals

DAVIS CUP

Agence France-Presse
MALAGA

Australia defeated record 32-time Davis Cup winner the United States 2-1 to reach the semifinals here on Thursday.

World No. 4 Taylor Fritz had pulled the US level in the tie by beating Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-4 in the second singles rubber before Matthew Ebden and Jordan Thompson scored a 6-4, 6-4 win over Ben Shelton and Tommy Paul. In the opening clash Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis edged Shelton 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (16/14) with a gripping tie-break triumph.

The match-up was the most played in Davis Cup history with this their 48th meeting, with the first back in 1905. Australia, which has lifted the trophy 28 times, last won the tournament in 2003 and finished as runner-up in the last two editions.

Verstappen in sight of exclusive club of four-time F1 champions

LAS VEGAS GP

Agence France-Presse
LAS VEGAS

Max Verstappen will become just the sixth man in Formula One history to win four World championship titles if he can see off his friend and rival Lando Norris at the Las Vegas Grand Prix this weekend.

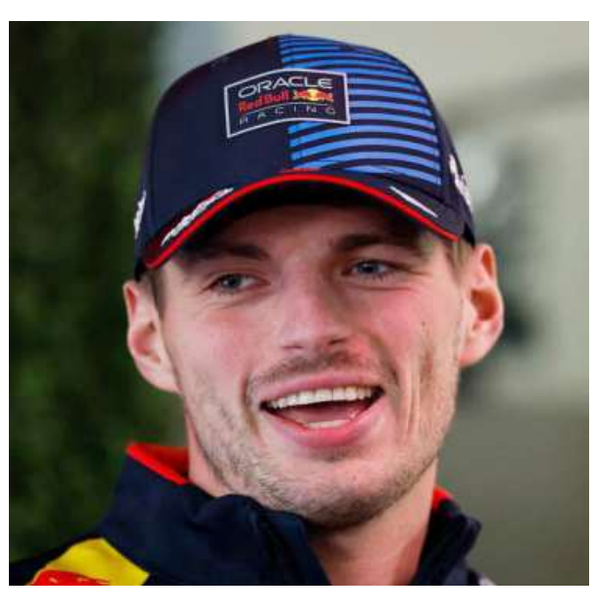
Red Bull's three-time champion, who ended a 10-race winless drought by storming to victory from 17th on the grid in Brazil three weeks ago, needs only to stay ahead of Norris, or keep the McLaren driver out of the top eight finishers, to retain his crown.

The Dutchman, on 393, holds a 62-point lead over Norris, on 331, with 60 more points to be won after the Vegas race.

He knows he has no need to gamble as he seeks to join multiple champions Juan Manuel Fangio (five titles), Alain Prost (four), Michael Schumacher (seven), Sebastian Vettel (four) and Lewis Hamilton (seven).

After a blistering start to the season which saw him win seven of the first 10 races, Verstappen suffered a dip that saw his aggressive racing style called into question.

A return to form in Brazil and the experience of having won on the garish streets of Sin City in the inaugural Las Vegas event last year makes Verstappen a clear favourite to take his fourth title in consecutive years.



Gameplan: Red Bull's Verstappen is likely to play it safe in Vegas to finish ahead of Norris and claim his crown. REUTERS

Here is how Verstappen can be champion
He wins the race
He finishes ahead of Norris
Norris finishes outside the top eight without claiming fastest lap

McLaren, however, seeking a first constructors' title since 1998, will aim to postpone the seemingly inevitable as the F1 circus enters a triple-header finale to the season with races to follow in Qatar and Abu Dhabi on December 1 and 8.

McLaren lead the teams' title race with 593 ahead of Ferrari on 557 and Red Bull on 544.

Norris will have to beat Verstappen and finish in the top eight to keep his challenge alive – but with the constructors' title up for grabs, he will race with clear instructions not to take excessive risks after crashing out last year and flopping in Brazil where he finished sixth after starting from pole position in a rain-hit race.

His McLaren team chief Zak Brown urged Norris to push to the limits, but not exceed them this weekend following two flashpoint battles between the pair in Texas and Mexico.

In a close contest, both teams will rely on their second drivers Oscar Piastri of McLaren and Sergio Perez of Red Bull as they attempt to fend off Ferrari's challenge led by Charles Leclerc, who took pole last year and finished second.

Hamilton thinks positive as end of Mercedes era nears

Agence France-Presse
LAS VEGAS

Lewis Hamilton on Wednesday said he had shrugged off deep disappointment after the Sao Paulo Grand Prix and pledged to give his all for Mercedes in his final three races before joining Ferrari.

The seven-time world champion admitted he had felt like "not coming back" in a radio reaction at the end of the race in Brazil where he finished 10th but had recovered and now wanted to give his best for "a team I love".

Speaking ahead of this weekend's Las Vegas GP, he was asked about a team radio exchange in which he suggested he was ready to walk away.

In the radio transmission, he said "that was a disaster of a weekend guys, the worst the car has ever been. Thank you for contributing to try and great job to all the guys at the pit-stop. If this is the last time I get to perform, it was a shame it wasn't great, but (I am) grateful for you".

Hamilton will end a hugely-successful 12-year spell with Mercedes after the Qatar and Abu Dhabi Grands Prix next month.

"In the moment, that's how I felt, like I didn't really want to come back after that weekend," he explained. "In the heat of the moment, for sure, I would much rather be on the beach and chilling...

"And I don't need to do this, but I'm here, I love this job and I'm going to give it my all in these last few races and finish strong. That was always the plan."

Supriya Attre claims discus gold

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Supriya Attre of Lady Shri Ram College came up with an impressive throw of 45.63 metres to clinch the discus gold in the 98th inter-collegiate athletics meet at the Delhi University polo ground on Thursday.

Amaty Sharma (10.93) and Tanisha Raghav (12.49) won the men's and women's 100m.

Supriya.

The results: Men: 100m: Amaty Sharma (10.93); 2. Anshu Trivedi (11.25); 800m: 1. Anish Nehra (1:56.63); 2. Mayank Yadav (2:00.27).
Women: 100m: 1. Tanisha Raghav (12.49); 2. Megha Rawat (12.68); **800m:** 1. Prabhiti Rao (2:22.98); 2. Anita Choudhary (2:39.07); **5,000m:** 1. Riya Pandey (20:17.48); 2. Neha (20:23.89); **Javelin:** 1. Disha Sharma (27.78); 2. Tannu Tiwari (25.17); **Discus:** 1. Supriya Attre (45.63); 2. Priyanka Yadav (32.32).

Aaryavir Sehwag smashes double hundred

Press Trust of India
SHILLONG

Virender Sehwag's son Aaryavir on Thursday smashed an unbeaten 200 off 229 balls during Delhi's Cooch Behar Trophy (under-19) contest against Meghalaya.

Opening the batting alongside Arnav Bugga, who made 114 (108 balls), Aaryavir hammered 34 fours and couple of sixes. In reply to Meghalaya's 260, Delhi reached 468 for two in 81 overs at stumps on day two.

Battle-ready: leader Bumrah will thrive in the skipper's hat

The pace spearhead is known to shine under pressure and the Test series against Australia is expected to be more of the same; he is one of the most lethal weapons in any captain's arsenal and will be a different beast with him calling the shots in Perth

R. Kaushik

AFP

Jasprit Bumrah could so easily have been a professor. He is already a professor, many will say, a professor of fast bowling, if an unconventional one at that. But he could have also gone into teaching and made a fabulous job of it.

You only have to listen to him at a press conference if you entertain any doubts. He speaks slowly, thoughtfully and with tremendous clarity, breaking things down to such levels of simpleness that even the slowest can comfortably keep track. Occasionally, he might give off the impression that he is talking down even if that is not the intention, because Jasprit Bumrah is not cut from that cloth.

On Friday morning at the impressive if intimidating Optus Stadium in Perth, Bumrah will walk out for the toss with Pat Cummins to herald the start of the first five-Test series between India and Australia in Australia since 1991-92. It won't be Bumrah's debut as Test captain - he performed that role in Birmingham in June 2022 when Rohit Sharma was down with Covid - but it will still be a special moment for someone who has come on so much in such a short time in international cricket.

Rarity

Fast-bowler-captains are a rarity in Test cricket, for whatever reason. Maybe they shoulder such a demanding workload that the decision-makers feel they are best left to their own devices, to rest and recuperate physically and mentally between overs instead of having to worry about bowling changes and field placements and stuff like that.

It's not as if there haven't been long-term skippers who have been pace bowlers - the Pakistan trio of Imran Khan, Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis headlines a list that includes, among others, Kapil Dev, Ian Botham, Bob Willis, Courtney Walsh, Shaun Pollock, Mashrafe Mortaza and, more recently, Tim Southee - but they haven't been as many as batting-captains, one of the many quirks Test cricket in particular keeps throwing up.

Bumrah's first tilt at Test captaincy ended in a resounding seven-wicket loss with England chasing down more than 375 in the fourth innings with utter impunity. Despite the result, Bumrah professed to enjoying that responsibility. He will need to be on point every inch of the way, starting from Friday, if India are to make a strong start to their campaign in the absence of Rohit and regular No. 3 Shubman Gill, as well as Bumrah's pace-partner-in-crime for many years now, Mohammed Shami.

The (capt) against his name is merely an official affirmation of Bumrah's standing in the Indian cricketing firmament. He has been a leader in his own right almost from the time he made his Test debut in South Africa in 2018, slipping effortlessly not only into the pace spearhead's capacity but also sharing his inherent wisdom and ever-expanding knowledge around, taking over a mentoring role very early in his career and clearly relishing it.

Bedrock of success

The bedrock of his success has been self-belief, a message he has been quick to pass on to a young bunch of quicks who will be his allies over the next seven weeks. Apart from Mohammed Siraj, who made his Test debut on India's last Australia tour in 2020-21, there is a great deal of inexperience in the fast-bowling ranks. Akash Deep has five Test caps, Prasidh Krishna two, and Harshit Rana and all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy have yet to make their first appearance.

As such, without Shami, the responsibility on Bumrah to keep delivering the wickets that will keep India in the contest has increased manifold though if there is one thing that's been evident for the last nine years since his India debut, there is nothing Bumrah thrives in more than responsibility.

It's no surprise that batting legends past and present have installed him as the most difficult pacer to negotiate in world cricket currently. Bumrah is unorthodox in so many ways that his unorthodoxy is one of his primary allies.

Much has been said of his braced left knee and his hyperextended right elbow that allows him to release the ball a little later than anyone else, which messes up the batter's perception of length. But Bumrah isn't only about the absence of classicism. He is a class act, any which way you look at it, blessed with the felicity to use the new ball and old with equally devastating impact and having an outstanding cricket brain to boot.

GETTY IMAGES

It's his intelligence, his ability to read and sum up situations rapidly and to set batters up, that has thrust him to the top of the pace bowling pile. With little perceptible change in action, he can make the ball do different things from nearly the same release. His control is exemplary and he seldom has off-days, which is a great luxury for any captain. And when he himself is the captain, well, beware.

One of the dangers of being a bowler-captain is the possibility of either over-bowling or under-bowling oneself, goes conventional wisdom. Bumrah being Bumrah, he has an entirely different take on this issue.

"I can manage myself the best when I'm the captain, because I know when I'm fresh, when I know I have to push myself, and I know when I have to take extra responsibility," he said on Test eve. "There are different challenges, yes, but there are advantages as well and I look at the advantages. I look at the positives more than the negatives."

Without harping too much on the theme, Bumrah knows he is merely filling in for Rohit, who should return from paternity leave next week. But another of the Gujarat quick's great strengths has been his ability to live in the present, to learn from the past but not allow it weigh him down, to leave the baggage of past failures and disappointments behind, and to start from scratch every time he sets foot on the cricket field.

Master

Now on his third Test tour of Australia - it was here too that he made his ODI debut in early 2016 - Bumrah knows the conditions here as well as any overseas fast bowler can be expected to. He is a master at finding, and then hitting, the right lengths on any surface and in Australia, length is the key, especially for those - bowlers and batters - coming from the subcontinent.

Because there is significant bounce, the propensity is to bang the ball in shorter and try and unsettle the batter and while that might look pretty for a while, it certainly doesn't come with the guarantee of success.

For batters coming from tracks with less bounce, the inclination to play deliveries that they could so easily leave on bounce is understandable, which is why the need for the discipline, particularly when the Kookaburra is hard and new, to resist the temptation of flirting with balls in the corridor that could be left alone.

The Kookaburra can be a batter's ally when it gets a little old and soft because it seldom deviates from the seam but Bumrah knows how to make even the most unresponsive cherry do his bidding. He will keep probing away, looking for and then cashing in on the slightest hint of weakness or uncertainty, but what makes him lethal is his immense control even when he is trying something different.

Greatest challenge

This is arguably Bumrah's greatest challenge in Test cricket - even temporarily setting aside the fact that he is the stand-in skipper - against a talented but prone-to-fragility Australian batting line-up. There is no David Warner to take the bowling on up front, Usman Khawaja is more an accumulator rather than a destroyer and debutant opener Nathan McSweeney will inevitably feel the pressure, which means Bumrah will get a little more leeway to settle into his rhythm.

Once he finds his bearings, he is capable of immeasurable damage if there is even the slightest assistance in the air or off the deck. And even if there is nothing in the surface, Bumrah can just do batters in the air. Like an ashen-faced Ollie Pope will testify.

Australia will believe the longer they can see Bumrah off and keep him wicketless, not just in Perth but elsewhere too when Rohit returns, the greater the chances of him succumbing to frustration in an effort to overreach and try too hard.

There is a sense of unfinished business within the Australian ranks; several in this Cummins-led outfit haven't been part of a Border-Gavaskar Trophy winning team even though Australia are the defending champions of both the World Test Championship and the 50-over World Cup. In the past, they have often targeted the head of the snake - the euphemism for the player in the opposition ranks most likely to influence the outcome of the contest - and it won't be any different with Bumrah, which is a great tribute to the 30-year-old, given Australia's unending obsession with Virat Kohli.

How smartly Bumrah responds to those attacks will make for interesting viewing because Bumrah loves the scent of a battle as much as he does making batters look sheepish with toe-crushing yorkers, beautifully disguised slower ones, radar-directed in-duckers and the late away-swinger that rushes in for a romantic tryst with the outside edge.

In a fortnight's time, exactly on the day the pink-ball Test starts in Adelaide (December 6), Bumrah will celebrate his 31st birthday. Now, how wonderful it would be if he could give himself an early birthday present by fusing incisive spells with decisive leadership for an optimal performance at the Optus.

THE GIST

- Bumrah's first tilt at Test captaincy ended in a resounding seven-wicket loss with England chasing down more than 375 in the fourth innings. Despite the result, Bumrah professed to enjoying that responsibility
- The pacer has been a leader in his own right almost from the time he made his Test debut in South Africa in 2018
- One of the dangers of being a bowler-captain is the possibility of either over-bowling or under-bowling oneself, goes conventional wisdom
- Bumrah is unorthodox in so many ways that his unorthodoxy is one of his primary allies

A primer on how to survive the declining air quality in India

The Centre in its recent order to States, Union Territories warned that air pollution is a significant contributor to acute health conditions. It has asked them to initiate measures to ensure preparedness in view of the deteriorating air quality across northern India with the onset of winters and its adverse impact on people's health

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The combination of festive activities and the onset of winter have further deteriorated the Air Quality Index (AQI) in certain States and Union Territories across India forcing the Union Health Ministry to issue an advisory directing State health departments and healthcare facilities to enhance their preparedness to safeguard the health of public against the ill effects of rising air pollution levels.

Recently, the Ministry has said that people should limit outdoor activities including early morning/late evening sports and walks (particularly the elderly and vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, children, and those working outdoors like traffic police officers).

The Central government in its recent order to State and Union Territories warned that air pollution is a significant contributor to acute health conditions and exacerbates the progression of related chronic diseases. It has asked them to initiate measures to ensure preparedness in view of the deteriorating air quality across northern India, with the onset of winters, and its adverse impact on people's health.

The letter from the Centre has directed that public awareness campaigns through mass media be pressed into action and has also called for strengthening the healthcare workforce and increasing participation in sentinel surveillance for air pollution-related diseases.

Weather experts have noted that air quality in the National Capital is currently in the 'very poor' category with hospitals registering a rise in the number of patients coming in with adverse respiratory symptoms.

In his letter, Director General of Health Services Atul Goel said that the adverse effects of air pollution are "particularly severe" for vulnerable groups. Stating that chronic illnesses, attributed to prolonged exposure to air pollution, often lead to an increase in premature mortality, the letter said that there is a need to ensure "enhanced preparedness."

Alarming rise in pollution

The Central government has sought to discourage stubble and waste burning, promoting use of public transportation, limiting reliance on diesel-based generators etc. Also, individuals have been advised to minimise their exposure to polluted air by monitoring air quality indices through government mobile applications before venturing outdoors.

Clearing the air: An anti-smog gun spraying water on Kartavya Path. After staying in the 'severe plus' category for several days, the overall air quality of Delhi improved slightly to the 'very poor' level on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Capital and its nearby areas along with other regions of the country have been witnessing alarming rise in pollution levels with the Delhi-NCR AQI hovering around 300-400 range and has even gone up to over 500.

Experts said, in the month of October and on the onset of winter, they have been witnessing nearly 40% spike in the cases of cardio and respiratory problems including asthma, triggered by high levels of pollution. The World Heart Federation's World Heart Report 2024, indicated alarming statistics on the relationship between air pollution and cardiovascular disease (CVD) globally. In India, a country already burdened with a high prevalence of CVDs, the impact of environmental factors, particularly air pollution, poses a significant public health challenge.

Experts are now calling for urgent attention and action to address these environmental triggers of CVDs. Indian cardiologists and public health professionals emphasise that without addressing pollution, tackling cardiovascular health challenges will remain an uphill battle.

Emphasising the clinical mechanisms through which pollution impacts heart health Faraz Ahmed Farooqui, consultant-Cardiology, PSRI Hospital, aid that long-term exposure to air pollution leads to endothelial dysfunction and oxidative stress, both of which are critical precursors to cardiovascular diseases.

Centre has sought to discourage stubble and waste burning, promoting use of public transportation, limiting reliance on diesel-based generators

"In India, the incidence of conditions such as coronary artery disease, stroke, and heart failure has seen a marked increase in polluted areas. These pollutants not only increase blood pressure but also trigger inflammatory responses in the blood vessels, accelerating atherosclerosis, which further heightens the risk of heart attacks and strokes," he said.

The World Heart Report also highlights how particulate matter from agricultural practices, particularly residue burning in North India, significantly impacts air quality. The plumes from burning crop stubble contribute to spikes in particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), aggravating the cardiovascular health of millions.

Praveen Gupta, principal director & chief of Neurology, Fortis Hospital, added that pollution causes a significant impact on human health. "It is a leading risk factor for stroke, cognitive impairment, and dementia. Pollution has a negative influence on mental health, producing loss of focus, irritation, and brain fog. There is mounting evidence that exposure to air pollution increases the risk of cognitive decline and neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's," he said.

The primary causes of this heightened risk include traffic exhaust fumes, home wood burning, and elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide, which can be ascribed to industrial emissions, gardening equipment, power plants, and construction and exhaust fumes.

Experts are now advocating for steps to decrease air pollution in their communities, such as utilising public transportation wherever feasible, reducing the use of wood and coal in the house, repairing cars on a regular basis, and inspecting tires often.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), notes that air pollution can cause a variety of health issues including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, acute respiratory infections, and asthma, cancer (lung cancer), preterm and low-birthweight, cognitive and neurological impairment.

Air pollution is a major environmental health problem that affects people of all income levels. In 2019, the WHO estimated that 4.2 million people died prematurely due to outdoor air pollution. Low- and middle-income countries are disproportionately affected by air pollution, with 89% of premature deaths occurring in these nations. Air pollution is the second leading cause of non-communicable diseases globally.

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THE GIST

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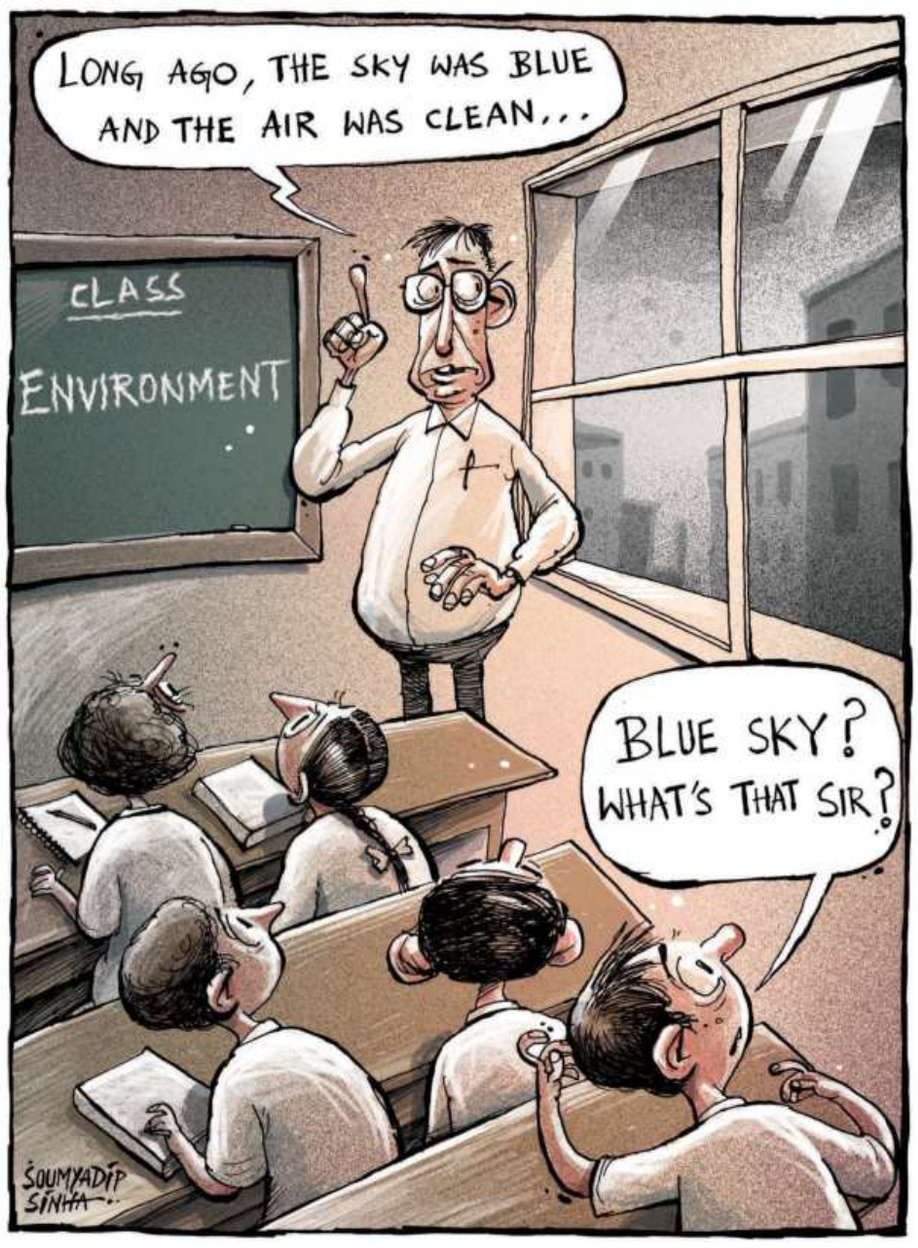
HUMERUS



During AMR week, lessons in vaccination

Subramanian Swaminathan

Immunisation has been one of the biggest success stories in public health globally, second only to sanitation and water safety. Vaccination has led to the eradication of small pox and polio in India, which are no longer the scourges they used to be. However, our vaccination initiatives in the country still leave many opportunities underutilised, leading to an actual cost to be paid in the future. While India's success in recovering its childhood vaccination rates post pandemic is laudable, unfortunately, we do not have accurate data on the scenario with some vaccines – for instance, the vaccine against pneumococcal pneumonia (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine- PCV) and the Haemophilus influenzae vaccine (Hib). These two vaccines are fairly recent additions to the government's immunisation programme, and were designed for rapid upscale when COVID-19 hit. Data on these burden from these two pathogens is not currently available, but the last estimate from 2015 had placed it at 1.84 million cases and 84,000 deaths. The significance of this lies in the fact that these two pathogens – Streptococcus pneumoniae and Haemophilus influenzae – are a leading cause of upper and lower respiratory infections in all decades of life, and are an important concern for children under five. They are amongst the commonest causes of ear infections (otitis media), lung infections (pneumonia) and brain infections (meningitis). The introduction of the PCV as a childhood vaccine has been achieved in most developed countries across the globe, as well as in 60 of the 73 Gavi vaccine alliance eligible countries. This has resulted in a steep fall in pneumonia cases in children, as well as deaths.

Studies indicate that unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children are vulnerable to preventable illnesses.

A larger problem

Whilst the direct, short-term effects are often reported, what is generally not recognised is that non-vaccination fuels a larger problem that is of global concern.

Studies indicate that unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children are vulnerable to preventable illnesses and have to seek medical care, as well as, crucially, often the unnecessary abuse of antibiotics, fuelling the epidemic of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). AMR week is recognised from November 18-24.

'One Health' approach

South and Southeast Asia account for 6.5% of global antibiotic usage, including 54.9% of the World Health Organization Watch classified antibiotics. This has set off alarm bells, and compounded by the problem of extensively drug-resistant infections set against a practically dry drug development pipeline, is a nightmare in the making. Many interventions are being designed to address this as part of the 'One Health' approach, but the value of vaccination in reducing antibiotic use has not been given enough attention.

A recent paper in *The Lancet* Regional Health South Asia by Chirag Kumar and his colleagues has assessed the possible benefits of increasing coverage of both these vaccines. Their assessment was of increasing vaccine coverage across India, and the anticipated benefits in terms of reduction of infection rates from the two pathogens mentioned above, and the potential reduction in antibiotic use fuelled by these illnesses.

Firstly, there is an expectation of a significant reduction in the disease burden, and the benefit, the paper found, would be striking in vulnerable States including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal. There is also an anticipated fall in the disease burden and mortality in all groups, irrespective of economic background. If the population were subdivided by wealth, the benefit would be greatest – including in mortality reduction – in those most economically disadvantaged. In addition, the estimate is of a reduction of 67,000 deaths a year.

Secondly, on the issue of antibiotic abuse, the model strongly indicates a meaningful reduction in antibiotic consumption in children, and this fall would be most pronounced in the economically advantaged group due to cost reasons. However, this reduction in usage could lead to more equitable usage of antibiotics, and reduction in the burden amongst those most economically disadvantaged.

(Dr. Subramanian Swaminathan is Director- Infectious Diseases and Infection Control, GHC, Chennai and Bengaluru and Vice President, Clinical Infectious Diseases Society of India. drsubramanians@gmail.com.)

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